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A Cultural Analysis of Furniture-Making in Petersburg, Virginia, 1760-1820

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A CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FURNITURE-MAKING IN PETERSBURG,
VIRGINIA, 1760 TO 1820

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of American Studies
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Jonathan Prown

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the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts



Jonathan Prown

Approved, May 1993



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This project is dedicated to Dr. Katherine Hemple Prown, whose constant encouragement served as my inspiration and whose considerable editorial talents helped make my untamed prose presentable.

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ABSTRACT

Situated just below the falls of the Appomattox River and surrounded by fertile tobacco land, Petersburg, Virginia, emerged during the middle of the eighteenth century as an important cultural and economic center, a role that has, to date, been largely overlooked by historians and decorative arts scholars. Integral to Petersburg's early economy was a wide range of mercantile operations and trade shops, and surviving evidence strongly suggests that the town supported an extensive furniture community. This study considers the evolution of furniture making in Petersburg between 1760 and 1820 and concludes that it was inextricably bound to larger cultural patterns and directly affected by a variety of local, national, and international events. In addition, this study also strives to add Petersburg's craft legacy to the existing body of scholarship on furniture making in the South.

A CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FURNITURE-MAKING IN PETERSBURG,
VIRGINIA: 1760-1820

INTRODUCTION

This study is designed to provide a cultural foundation upon which more detailed analyses of Petersburg furniture making traditions can be formed. My main goal is not to identify as many local furniture groups as possible; I offer that diagnostic and fully illustrated study in an article that comprises the entire May 1992 issue of the Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts. Instead I here subordinate the question "what did Petersburg furniture look like?," to questions like "why did it look the way it did?," "who made it?," "what traditions influenced it?" and "what larger cultural patterns does it reveal?." By adopting such an approach, I intend to move beyond the limited perspective of traditional formal analyses, in which the products of early American artisans have often been considered only as discrete, acultural, aesthetic expressions. Essential to this study, then, is the idea that objects are created within and because of their specific cultural parameters. Accordingly, Petersburg furniture made between 1760 and 1820 not only represents specific artistic and technical traditions, but also broader social, economic and demographic trends. To paraphrase Dell Upton, Petersburg furniture is only as interesting as the people who made it.¹

Previous furniture studies, notably Ronald L. Hurst's Cabinetmakers and Related Tradesmen in Norfolk, Virginia: 1770-1820, have successfully combined the methodologies of several disciplines--including those of historians, economists, and art historians--to reach meaningful conclusions

¹ Dell Upton, Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia, (New York: The Architectural History Foundation, 1986), p. xxii.

about the role of early American furniture makers.² By first identifying the local furniture making traditions and then placing them in a broader socio-economic context, Hurst discerns significant patterns which relate the artisans and their work to the world they lived in. By employing this paradigm, the manufactures of early Petersburg furniture makers should emerge as the logical cultural expressions of artisans working in a rapidly evolving Tidewater city in which systems of trade and commerce were fatefully bound to local and trans-Atlantic patterns of production and consumption.³ Hurst's identification of Norfolk's specific craft traditions and their relationship to larger cultural patterns mirrors Dell Upton's analysis of Virginia's Anglican Churches, which convincingly argues that regio-specific material culture studies must document the local context and then work out, rather than fitting the subject to a general or preconceived theoretical framework.⁴ Upton's method, like Hurst's, strongly suggests that an important urban center like Petersburg developed idiosyncratic craft traditions which, once identified, can be correlated with larger cultural patterns.

Prior to the Revolutionary War Petersburg, like the rest of eastern Virginia, retained strong cultural and economic ties to Britain. From the earliest years of the colony, British financial interests guided Virginia's development. Of essential concern was the creation of an economically

² Ronald L. Hurst, "Cabinetmakers and Related Tradesmen in Norfolk, Virginia: 1770-1820," Master's Thesis, College of William & Mary, 1989.

³ In this study, Williamsburg, Norfolk, Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Petersburg are referred to as "Tidewater" towns. The last three, arguably, could be labeled "Piedmont" towns because of their primary role as market centers for inland counties. They are here being called Tidewater to indicate not only their intimate socio-economic connections with Virginia's eastern urban centers and but also their direct participation with international trade networks.

⁴ Upton, p. xxii.

connected network of towns modeled on the British system.⁵ What evolved in the early years of the colony, however, was a landscape marked by a distinct lack of cities and smaller towns. Tobacco became the primary focal point of colonial Virginia's economy, which required massive amounts of arable land and a large, unskilled work force. Low population densities, the cyclical character of the tobacco economy, the minimal commodity demands of the large indentured population, and the absence of concentrated capital all contributed strongly to Virginia's diffused agrarian landscape.⁶ In spite of its deviation from the desired model, however, Virginia proved to be a valuable asset for Britain, since the colony's early tobacco culture largely depended on international trade connections for most of its material needs, a market eagerly assumed by British interests.⁷

Only after the start of the eighteenth century did the colony experience a significant degree of urbanization, thanks to the rapidly growing population and the inevitable concentration of economic activity at the points of interchange, where inland tobacco arrived for transfer onto seagoing vessels. Indeed, such a pattern marks the establishment of Petersburg on the falls of the Appomattox River, the river's furthest point of tidal entry. With urban development came an expansion in local trade offerings, which in turn reduced the need for British wares. After the war Petersburg's reliance on

⁵ Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," from Perspectives in American History, Ed. Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, Vol. X, 1976, p. 49.

⁶ Earle and Hoffman, p. 49

⁷ The term "trade" has several important definitions. When speaking of economic patterns, it refers to the movement or transfer of commerce between buyer and seller--for example "tobacco trade," or "international trade." When applied to artisans, the word implies involvement in a manual or craft skill, as opposed to retail or mercantile activity--for example "the chairmaking trade," or "tradespeople."

British trade declined considerably and the town became increasingly absorbed into America's emerging national economic system. Such changes proved to have a dramatic effect on the nature of local furniture making traditions.

What follows, then, is an examination of a single Virginia town's evolution as an important regional economic center and an analysis of the the role assumed by furniture makers in this development. Between 1760 and 1820, Petersburg's furniture making community experienced substantial expansion and diversification, as did the region's economy as a whole. Local artisans confronted a complex range of local, national and international developments which provided both opportunities and obstacles.

By examining furniture trades between 1760 and 1820, this analysis aims to shed light on the larger patterns of socio-economic development affecting Petersburg--and by extension eastern Virginia--during a period of substantial cultural change, when bonds to one nation were severed and ties to another were established.

FROM TRADING OUTPOST TO COMMERCIAL CENTER: THE EMERGENCE OF THE TOWN

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Tidewater Virginia experienced extensive growth fueled by a burgeoning tobacco culture whose voracious need for land necessitated continual westward expansion. A natural transition area for those moving inland lay at the falls of large estuaries, the furthest point of tidal entry for large ships. Like Richmond on the James River and Fredericksburg on the Rappohanock, Petersburg was established along Virginia's fall line on the Appomattox River, providing a stopping point where western settlers and traders could begin their overland travels. With the establishment of the first permanent English colony at Jamestown in 1607, continuous settlement began along the Appomattox River below the falls, growth that intensified after 1630 as numerous land grants became available. Indicative of the area's extensive development during this period was the establishment of a permanent Anglican parish.⁸ Notable for the purposes of this study, however, was Edward Prince's 1639 acquisition of over 500 acres of land surrounding the falls.

Displaced by immigrants like Prince were the native Eastern Woodland Indians who had resided for over 10,000 years in southern Virginia.⁹ Violent clashes resulted. In 1645 Fort Henry, located on Prince's land at the falls, was established by the Virginia legislature primarily in response to

⁸ The parish became known as Bristol. See James G. Scott and Edward Wyatt, IV, Petersburg's Story - A History, (Petersburg: Titmus Optical Company, 1960), pp. 4-5. To date, this volume stands as one of the few major historical texts on the city.

⁹ Richard L. Jones, Dinwiddie County, (Richmond: Whittet & Shepardson, 1976), p.

Oppechancanough's 1644 assault on English settlements in the Tidewater area. Defended by forty-five men from Charles City, James City, and Isle of Wight counties, the fort stood "for the defense of the inhabitants on the south side of James River and the prevention of the great reliefe and subsistance to the salvages by fishing in Bristoll alias Appomattocke River, as also for the cutting down their corn, or performing any other service upon them."¹⁰

A number of early Virginians interacted peacefully and profitably with the Native Americans, however. Active trade systems that dealt in fur and agricultural goods soon evolved, providing networks that proved essential to Petersburg's subsequent growth. Not long after the activation of Fort Henry, the imminent threat of further Indian attacks subsided considerably as the white presence in the region grew and maintenance of the fort became a financial burden to the citizens of the colony. Accordingly, the structure itself and more than five-hundred acres of land were deactivated and granted to Abraham Wood, who had served as Major-General since the fort's inception.

Wood, a prominent figure in the colony, had previously led numerous explorations across much of southern Virginia and he recognized the advantageous position of this site as a primary point of departure for inland exploration and trade ventures. Under his powerful influence, the area around the falls emerged as a regional economic center, a role evident on Augustine Hermann's 1670 map of the Tidewater region, on which the land at the falls was simply referred to as "Wood."¹¹ His participation in local trade activity, as well as his ongoing support of explorations into the lands south and

¹⁰ Jones., p. 6.

¹¹ James H. Baily and Thomas F. Hale, Old Petersburg, (Richmond: Hale Publishing, 1976), p. 16.

west of the Appomattox, regions referred to in 1650 as "Blandina" and "New Brittain," brought him even greater personal wealth.

Wood's son-in-law, Peter Jones, inherited the property at the falls. Renewed Indian uprisings lead to the reactivation of the fort in 1675 and he was placed in command. The unrest was short-lived, however, and Jones quickly resumed trade with local Indians. His significant role in the economic development of early Petersburg was recalled in Dr. W.S. Plumer's 1833 instruction manual for local Presbyterians. Noting that "Peter Jones opened a trading establishment with the Indians, a few yards west of what is now the junction of Sycamore and Old Streets," Plumer explained that the area was called "Peter's Point," subsequently changed to "Petersburg."¹² Following the lead of Abraham Wood, Jones embarked on an extensive range of business ventures, and in doing so, encouraged other entrepreneurs to take advantage of the area's profitable location.

As James G. Scott and Edward Wyatt note the general increase in trade activity throughout the southern and western regions of the colony meant that large numbers of traders travelled past the falls of the Appomattox.¹³ Soon permanent roads, ferries and mills were constructed around the site. Rapid inland population growth resulted, establishing a pattern that characterized the development of other Virginia fall line cities as well. Far from having a random order, these transportation networks were carefully

¹² Manuel for the Members of the Presbyterian Church in Petersburg, (Petersburg: Yancy and Wilson, 1833). The stone building standing on the site, which is often referred to as Peter Jones "Trading Station" is, in fact, a later structure. Insurance documents and a marked stone in the foundation indicate that it could not predate 1809.

¹³ Scott and Wyatt, pp. 12-13.

designed and promoted by wealthy local planters and traders who stood to receive from them the greatest benefits.

Three major events--all occurring in the 1730s--shaped the character of what was to become Petersburg: the introduction of tobacco warehousing and the subsequent rise of a cash or staple crop economy, the construction of a permanent Anglican church, and William Byrd's formal declaration of the town's creation.¹⁴ In 1730 the colonial government authorized Colonel Robert Bolling to establish a tobacco inspection station on his land below the falls, the first of many warehouses along the lower Appomattox basin. These structures provided both a profitable, and later, a problematical, economic base for Petersburg's growing population. A British officer, describing the inspection warehouses in 1779, noted that before tobacco could be ready to trade it had to be examined "to confirm it in a proper state for exportation by inspectors, who prove the quality of the tobacco; and if found good, they give the planter a receipt for such a quantity, and these receipts pass current as cash."¹⁵ The socio-economic impact of the warehouses was profound. Further concentrating the power of the affluent Virginia planters, tobacco processing centers effectively formalized the subordinate economic position of poorer farmers by severely regulating trade. Historian Rhys Isaac offers a revealing portrait of the manner by which Virginia's leading tobacco planters used the warehouse and inspection system to create a self-serving landscape:

[T]he starting points, courses, and destinations of the roads were like diagrams of the needs, influence, and power of persons of importance

¹⁴ Although not officially incorporated as a town until 1748, I will forthwith refer to the site at the falls of the Appomattox as Petersburg, as it was commonly referred to after the 1720s.

¹⁵ Thomas Anburey, Travels Through the Interior Parts of America, (New York: The New York Times and Arno Press, 1969), p. 353.

in each neighborhood....The same groups of county gentry also recognized the important centers of service and exchange to which the roads led: they licensed both the water mills that tuned corn into meal and the 'ordinaries' that were placed at the crossroads, ferries, courthouses, and other facilities. Most important, they nominated the tobacco inspectors, whose decisions determined whether a grower's crop was cash or trash. Finally, the great gentlemen advised the colonial legislature on the siting of the warehouses and ferries as well as of the churches and courthouses.¹⁶

In short, Petersburg's tobacco warehouses served both as a physical representation of the tobacco elite's powerful socio-economic position and as the means through which small-scale farmers became more dependant than ever on the patronage of affluent planters. In sum, the warehouses provided a commercial focal point around which the early town was built.

Recent economic studies of other eastern Virginia cities shed light on the early development of Petersburg's tobacco economy. William Siener's "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810" reveals how Fredericksburg--similar to Petersburg in both size and proximity to the falls of a major river--evolved around the production of staple crops, like tobacco, wheat, and corn. As a result, the city experienced erratic economic growth.¹⁷ Siener argues that *in theory* economic reliance on highly profitable staples should lead to the introduction of complex systems of transportation and processing and to the use of highly skilled labor. As this

¹⁶ Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 30.

¹⁷ Siener, William, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810," diss., College of William and Mary, 1982.

work force grows and larger support facilities emerge to process the staple crop, entrepreneurial development and economic diversification occur.¹⁸ Without question, Petersburg and its surrounding counties experienced some of the benefits attendant to these economic patterns. Important determinants of economic and demographic development such as roads and buildings--including warehouses--evolved at a dramatic pace under the influence of large-scale tobacco production. *In practice*, however, the crop more often than not limited economic diversification. It was, in fact "a weak leader of urbanization."¹⁹ Because the plant did not require extensive processing from field to barrel, tobacco towns like Fredericksburg and Petersburg developed large but relatively unskilled work forces--primarily black slaves and white laborers who were too poor to participate fully in the local marketplace.

While it remains clear that Petersburg's initial growth revolved around the cultivation, processing and trade of tobacco, the city's evolution as an economically diversified commercial center could not have occurred without the local production of additional cash crops. Virginia's tobacco economy experienced repeated boom and bust cycles throughout much of the eighteenth century, as did most southern tobacco towns.²⁰ Without the eventual introduction of wheat, cotton, and their related industries, Petersburg would likely have followed the lead of London Town in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, a tobacco-focused center that all but disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century.²¹ In short, Petersburg's warehouses represent a logical extension of the town's early role as a regional trading

¹⁸ Siener, pp. 8-10.

¹⁹ Siener, p. 17.

²⁰ Siener, p. 17.

²¹ Siener, pp. 17-18.

center. They centralized and promoted substantial economic development, while at the same time polarizing the citizenry--a population already distinguished by the gap between those who served and those who were served. As subsequent chapters will detail, however, Petersburg's emergence as a market town was in many respects accomplished in spite of, rather than because of, its tobacco trade.

A second major event responsible for shaping the town's character was the establishment on Well's Hill of what is today referred to as Blandford Church. Built between 1735 and 1737, this brick structure was not the first church in the parish, which by that time was over 90 years old.²² But because of its proximity to the rapidly growing population center and its relatively affluent congregation, Blandford Church quickly became a large and powerful political force in the region. Churches played more than a simple religious role in colonial Virginia; they served as communal meeting places where ideological, political, and economic exchanges took place. Upton describes them as "elements of a specific social landscape...in their context of courthouses, large plantations, small planter's houses, and slave quarters, they were important aspects of a unified, though not monolithic physical structure through which the dominant culture was made tangible."²³ In both the liturgy presented at services and in the actual physical allotment of space in the buildings, Virginia's Anglican churches reflected and reinforced hierarchical cultural values and conveyed "powerful resonances of a traditional ordered community, in which persons were expected to aspire to become inwardly what the social constraints of their lives....required them to

²² Scott and Wyatt, p. 15.

²³ Upton, p. xix.

be outwardly."²⁴ Virginia's Anglican Churches were, in other words, essentially inseparable from the secular life of their surrounding communities.²⁵ As a result, Blandford Church, like the tobacco warehouses, played a major role in legitimating and regulating the arrangement of the society along the Appomattox.

A third event--this time prophetic--took place in 1733, after William Byrd II's exploration and survey of his vast land holdings across the southern part of the colony. Byrd, a major social and political figure in the colony, formally declared the creation of Petersburg, thus further promoting the site as a viable cultural center. In his account of the journey Byrd wrote:

When we got home, we laid the foundation of two large City's. One at Shacco's to be called Richmond, and the other at the Point of Appomattox River, to be named Petersburg. These Major Mayo offered to lay out into Lots without Fee or Reward. The Truth of it is, these two places being the uppermost Landing of James and Appomattox river, are naturally intended for Marts, where the Traffick of the Outer Inhabitents must center. Thus we did not build Castles only, but also Citys in the Air.²⁶

Byrd's specific role, if any, in the subsequent development of Petersburg ultimately is irrelevant, as are questions concerning the origins of the town's name. What does remain important, however, is Byrd's early recognition of the importance of major fall line sites like Petersburg. By the end of the 1730s--with the introduction of tobacco warehouses, the formation of Blandford Church and Byrd's declaration of the town--Petersburg's social and

²⁴ Isaac, p. 64.

²⁵ Upton, p. xxi.

²⁶ Scott and Wyatt, p. 16.

economic foundations stood firmly in place. However, even with continuous urbanization and socio-economic diversification, many of the fundamental and hierarchical patterns that defined the early years of the town remained into the early nineteenth century. Pursuant to these important initial events was the actual physical arrangement of the town and its environs.

In colonial America, a formal town plan served an important role in legitimating any site as a viable cultural center and provided the image of a stable commercial environment to attract new investors and tradespeople. By 1738 an ordered arrangement of lots along the south side of the Appomattox below the falls was drawn up, a design which reflected eastern Virginia's reliance on traditional British geometric townscapes.²⁷ In his survey of colonial town planning in Virginia and Maryland, John Reys notes that "both Richmond and Petersburg were planned at the upper limits of deep water navigation on the James and Appomattox rivers....it was only natural that [they followed] the elementary gridiron pattern used so extensively in the Tidewater."²⁸ As early as 1705, the Reverend Francis Makemie described several prerequisites for creating a successful Virginia town. His suggestions echo themes common both to Petersburg and to many other early Tidewater towns:

"Let all gentlemen of Estates be expeditious in building Dwelling houses and stores, both for merchants Goods and Tobacco, that the Trading Part of *England* may not complain for want of conveniences at your Towns. Let a sufficient number of craft, as Sloops and Flotts, be provided for

²⁷ The map is published in Scott and Wyatt, p. 15.

²⁸ Reys, John W., Tidewater Towns, City Planning in Colonial Virginia and Maryland, (Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1972), p. 224.

Transportation of all Tobacco to each Town, and at moderate Prices,
which will soon refund your charge."²⁹

Up until the middle of the eighteenth century, Petersburg mirrored Makemie's design by relying on a town plan aimed primarily at meeting the needs and aspirations of the planter elite--after this time, substantial urbanization and socio-economic diversification progressively changed the character of the town.

Petersburg's regional population grew considerably after the 1730s with the continued settlement of lands on both the north and south sides of the Appomattox River below the falls. By 1745 wealthy residents requested incorporation, a move that would legally empower them to propose and enact laws designed to secure further their control of the local economy. As the Bristol Parish vestry dictated, the lot arrangements along the river were to be divided into two distinct areas; in December 1748 these two sites were formally established by the Virginia legislature. Petersburg was to lie just below the falls, while Blandford, whose town plan was laid out by William Poythress, was to lie to the east along the river. Directly across the river in Chesterfield County, Richard Witton platted Wittontown, "a parcel of land into the standard checkerboard design, divided it into half-acre lots."³⁰ In 1752 the legislature accepted Witton's plan but changed the village's name to Pochahontas. Because of their proximity, the three towns were socially and economically integrated. As a result, accounts concerning pre-Revolutionary Petersburg often refer to Blandford and Pocohantas as well.

²⁹ Frances Makemie, "A Plain & Friendly Persuasive (sic) to the Inhabitants of Virginia and Maryland for Promoting Towns & Cohabitations," in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 4, (1897), p. 271.

³⁰ Reys, p. 222.

Legal establishment brought many commercial and physical improvements to the Petersburg area. Structures were subsequently required to meet specific building codes, including a ban on wooden chimneys, which were a distinct fire hazard. Legislative acts and tax laws were directed toward making the Appomattox a more efficient and productive navigational waterway, and ferries were replaced by bridges, which allowed faster transportation of goods. Legislative appeals in 1752 called for the first major bridgework to span the river to Pocohantas; a bridge appears on Robert Bolling's 1760 hand-drawn map of the area.³¹ Beginning in 1745 upriver residents successfully petitioned to clear the waterway to provide access for larger vessels and to control mill dams, fish hedges, trees and other obstructions.³² The lower Appomattox was similarly maintained, and in a 1782 description of Petersburg, the Marquis de Chastellux noted that "the river here can float vessels of fifty or sixty tons."³³ Shortly after Petersburg's formal establishment in 1748, the city also petitioned the legislature for funds to build a canal that would bypass the falls above the town and terminate in a basin at the center of the commercial district to facilitate the movements of goods past the falls. This project, however, was not begun until the 1790s.

With these and similar regional improvements, the lands south of the James River experienced a substantial increase in population, which in turn

³¹ J. A. LeMay, Ed., Robert Bolling Woos Ann Miller: Love and Courtship in Colonial Virginia, 1760, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), plate 1.

³² Scott and Wyatt, p. 17.

³³ The Marquis de Chastellux, Travels in North America in the Years 1780-1781 and 1782, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 426. Interestingly, in 1795 La Rochefoucauld noted that "boats of 100 or 120 tons....can go up to Richmond and Petersburg" in Voyage dans Les Etats Unis, (Paris, 1799), IV, p. 258. This increased tonnage may reflect efforts to dredge and clear the river in the 1790s.

necessitated further subdivision of counties and parishes. While Virginia's eastern Tidewater population diminished between 1745-1760 because of rising land costs, soil erosion, and limited land offerings, planters were lured to the fertile region south of the James River--including the Petersburg area--where soon the population nearly tripled. As a result, significant demographic changes occurred because to a large degree, these newcomers displaced the poor, white inhabitants of the rural Southside counties, many of whom had been squatters and only one sixth of whom had owned taxable slaves. Indeed, the dominant social structure of the region was transformed from one of small, low production farms with many transient residents, to a society controlled by a landed, slave-owning gentry--a wealthy clientele that would play a crucial role in promoting the economic development of Petersburg.³⁴ The legislature subdivided existing inland counties to regulate the growing population; by the end of the Revolutionary War, more than a dozen counties occupied the lands that in 1703 had all been within the boundaries of Prince George County. Pocohantas was made a part of Chesterfield County in 1749 and Petersburg was made a part of Dinwiddie County in 1752, while Blandford remained in Prince George County, the last two towns expanding steadily after the 1750s with frequent acquisitions and annexations of surrounding lands. Additionally, the creation of Amelia County in 1735 and its subsequent division into Prince Edward County in 1754 reflected the growth of Petersburg's upriver trading connections.

Although it is possible to arrive at a general understanding of the Petersburg area prior to the Revolutionary War, the relative lack of surviving

³⁴ Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves, The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 148-156.

trade records makes it difficult to develop a detailed picture of specific commercial activities. The town remained part of Dinwiddie County until 1784, when it incorporated with Blandford and Pocohantas to form an independent jurisdiction; the vast majority of Petersburg's intact records post-date that period. Unfortunately, most of the earlier Dinwiddie County records, including Petersburg's pre-Revolutionary documents, were destroyed by an 1835 fire and later by General Sheridan's forces during the Civil War. Furthermore, only in 1787 were valuable economic indicators, such as the annual return of tobacco receipts and shipments or notations concerning outstanding tobacco notes from the major warehouses, recorded in Prince George County.³⁵ Both catastrophe and poor record keeping, then, are responsible for the scarcity of vital details regarding this active tobacco community.

In spite of these losses, however, it remains possible to arrive at meaningful conclusions regarding the economic development of Petersburg and its environs. In the decades prior to the Revolution, steady population growth and commercial expansion suggest that development continued with few significant interruptions. The profitable tobacco trade provided, for the time being, a stable economic base for the emerging town. Interestingly, Virginia's growing fall line cities, located on the eastern edge of the Piedmont region, differed considerably from the numerous small eastern tobacco towns. Virginia's few large marketplaces processed the vast majority of inland tobacco. "Petersburg and Richmond grew to over 2,000 and 1,000 by 1776

³⁵ Inventory of the County Archives of Virginia, No. 75, Prince George County, (Historical Record Survey, Work Projects Administration), pp. 14-16.

because of their role as warehousing centers for the Virginia and Carolina interior."³⁶

Comments by early visitors and residents document this expansion. Scott and Wyatt quote an unnamed source who in 1762 noted that Petersburg "has since very greatly increased, and become a place of considerable trade."³⁷ The remarks of Roger Atkinson, a merchant who emigrated from England in 1750 to what is now the Dinwiddie County portion of Prince George County, offer further testimony to the town's considerable growth. After he established a plantation at "Mansfield," Atkinson wrote to an English acquaintance:

I well know that when Tob'o is not to be got at these Warehouses it is not to be got anywhere else in Virg'a...There is more land & more good Land & more inhabitants (& these yearly increasing) on the South side of James River than there is in all Virg'a besides. There is more Tob'o in these warehouses than there is in all York or James River besides from head to foot.³⁸

At the time these remarks were made, many new warehouses were under construction along the Appomattox, as rural planters sought to distribute even larger quantities of tobacco. Atkinson later commented on the similar profitability of Petersburg's "second staple," referring to the growing number of milling operations along the river used in the production of flour and wheat--a vital part of the town's subsequent economic development.³⁹

³⁶ Earle and Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urban Development in the Eighteenth Century South," p. 58.

³⁷ Scott and Wyatt, pp. 19-20.

³⁸ A. J. Morrison, "Letters of Roger Atkinson," in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XV, (1908), p. 347.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 1770.

Petersburg's viability as a regional market center was enhanced by transportation improvements, notably the establishment of a local post office that necessitated the building of additional overland trade routes and, as a result, facilitated the movement of goods to rural communities and outlying plantations. The Virginia Gazette of March 6, 1778 describes one of the major inland mail routes, which went through sites in Prince George County, to Blandford, west to Petersburg, south to Sussex and Brunswick Counties, and, if needed, down to Halifax, North Carolina.⁴⁰ This route was just one of many that brought rural staple crops, including those of North Carolina, to Petersburg and in return provided the town's emerging business community with a large regional clientele. Simultaneous improvements to river transportation only enhanced the area's growth.⁴¹

Movement of trade above the falls, already a route for transporting wares to and from Petersburg, expanded in the 1770s with the introduction of the James River batteau, a long, flat-bottomed craft well suited for travel along the shallow and often narrow Appomattox. Patterns of commerce on the lower portion of the river, where imports from other national and international market centers arrived, were already well established. Petersburg's growing population meant that a greater diversity of goods came to the area. Ships loaded with a wide variety of wares arrived from England, the West Indies, and New England. Indicating a vital cultural and economic link between the two towns, many of these vessels passed through Norfolk, Virginia's largest manufacturing center and its only major international port. The Duc du La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt recalled his impressions of Petersburg's expansive

⁴⁰ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, (Purdie), March 6, 1778, 1-2.

⁴¹ Kulikoff, p. 149.

river trade, noting that Bermuda Hundred, where the James meets the Appomattox, was "the spot where the custom house is established and where the larger vessels discharge their cargoe to lighters and send them to Richmond and Petersburg."⁴² As with other southern tobacco trading centers in this period, water transportation systems allowed Petersburg to develop strong, direct ties to some of the largest and wealthiest trading houses in England and Scotland, which only further contributed to the town's economic diversification and growth.⁴³

By the eve of the Revolutionary War, Scottish interests controlled nearly one-half of Virginia's tobacco trade and nearly two-thirds of the Upper James District, which included Petersburg.⁴⁴ The firm of William Cunninghame and Company, for example, controlled fourteen stores in Virginia by the 1770s, most of which were located in the fertile Piedmont region and all of which were run by Scottish emigrants and employed Scottish "assistants."⁴⁵ This powerful and influential firm established headquarter stores at Virginia's important fall line sites, including Petersburg, Richmond, Fredericksburg and Falmouth. Indeed, the dependence of Virginians on British mercantile operations is clearly indicated by the continued trade--albeit on a much reduced scale--during the war years. Although many loyalist traders were sent home and their businesses sequestrated by the Virginia

⁴² Duc du La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt

⁴³ Scott and Wyatt, p. 22.

⁴⁴ Richard R. Beeman, The Evolution of the Southern Backcountry: A Case Study of Lunenburg County, Virginia, 1746-1832, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), p. 79

⁴⁵ T.M. Devine, The Tobacco Lords: A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities, c. 1740-90, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), pp. 82-85.

government, only by trading cash crops could the war effort be funded and essential supplies received.⁴⁶

By the time of the Revolution, then, Petersburg was a thriving commercial center characterized by an increasingly diversified economy. "The men who achieved great wealth were merchants as well as planters. They bought up the crops of their neighbors and imported the manufactures their neighbors purchased."⁴⁷ What began as a profitable stopping point for fur traders and explorers evolved into a centralized marketplace--one with international connections--created by and for the area's tobacco and agricultural elite. Petersburg and other fall line cities acted as important transition areas along this trade network, where the crops of inland farms could be brought for processing and shipment. Essential to this trade system was the large port of Norfolk, where many of Petersburg's agricultural crops were shipped in return for British wares, activity recorded by the Duc de La Rochefoucault-Viancourt in 1795 when he noted that the products of the backcountry were moved to Petersburg and Richmond and "usually sent by barges to Norfolk, whence they are exported."⁴⁸ Indeed, Norfolk must be seen as Petersburg's primary trading partner. "Norfolk's northern trade was greatly stimulated by the rise of the Fall Line towns, for the merchants of these places rarely dealt directly with Europe or the West Indies. The more produce which came down the upper James to Richmond or down the

⁴⁶ Devine, p. 126.

⁴⁷ Lois Green Carr, "Diversification in the Colonial Chesapeake: Somerset County, Maryland, in Comparative Perspective," in Colonial Chesapeake Society, Ed. Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan and Jean B. Russo, (University of North Carolina Press:Chapel Hill, 1988), p. 351.

⁴⁸ La Rochefoucault, p. 258.

Appomattox to Petersburg, the greater would be the amount to be shipped from Norfolk's wharves."⁴⁹

After the middle of the eighteenth century, Virginia's fall line port towns, including Petersburg, began to resemble British port cities--fulfilling the desires of the colony's earliest British investors. Contemporary English port towns, in fact, were strikingly similar to Petersburg at the time of the Revolution:

Such ports on inland waterways were points of interchange, where cargoes were transferred between seagoing ships and flat-bottomed barges, to travel lazily up and down the rivers, under the power, usually, of a single square-masted sail, or pulled by men or horses when the wind was lacking. Upstream there were river ports at regular intervals [along the Appomattox individual plantation sites, many of which had their own docks, can be seen as individual ports] but the biggest and busiest, after those at the sea end, were where the river ceased to be navigable, the terminus of the line, so to speak.⁵⁰

Notably, this pattern differed from that of most of the smaller, eastern tobacco centers, which "achieved neither substantial size nor integration with a hierarchical urban system."⁵¹

General Henry Lee described Petersburg at the time of the Revolution as "the great mart of that section of the state which lies south of Appomattox, and of the northern part of North Carolina....and, after the destruction of Norfolk

⁴⁹ Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Norfolk: Historic Southern Port, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1931, second ed.), p. 83.

⁵⁰ Mark Girouard, The English Town - A History of Urban Life, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 34.

⁵¹ Earle and Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urbanization in the Eighteenth-Century South," p. 7.

[which was completely burned during the start of the war in January, 1776], ranked first among the commercial towns of the state."⁵² Another traveller, Johann David Schoepf, wrote that "Petersborough exports a great quantity of tobacco and other produce, supplied not only by the Virginia plantations round-about, but brought in from North Carolina." He also noted that the town consisted of at least three-hundred houses and that "new settlers...are continually coming in, tempted by the advantages of trade and shipping there."⁵³ In 1779 Thomas Anburey, a British officer, recorded that "there is a large wooden bridge, at the town of Pocahunta, up to which sloops, schooners, and small vessels continuously sail."⁵⁴ Cultural activity along the Appomattox was also quite substantial. Already a diverse social center, the town had its own theater by the 1770s. With the installation of race courses at Pride's Field and Newmarket, the area became an important regional turf racing center, one of the most popular diversions in the region. Thus by the time of the Revolutionary War, Petersburg had in place a wide variety of social, economic, and physical improvements which made it possible for the town to emerge as one of Virginia's major commercial centers.

Because of its increasing importance Petersburg, like Norfolk, became a prime target for the British during the War; enemy forces gained control of the town in April, 1781. According to General Henry Lee, "everything valuable was destroyed, and the wealth of this town in a few hours disappeared."⁵⁵ Colonel John Bannister, who lived at "Battersea," an elegant Palladian-style brick mansion one mile west of the town center, noted that

⁵² Scott and Wyatt, p. 27.

⁵³ Johann David Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, (1783-1784), (New York: Burt Franklin), p. 72.

⁵⁴ Anburey, p. 354.

⁵⁵ Scott and Wyatt, p. 29.

when the British occupied his home, among the many losses was his "furniture."⁵⁶ However, outstanding evidence strongly suggests that the destruction was not quite as severe as these descriptions indicate. While a good deal of tobacco and a number of warehouses were burned, the town did not suffer nearly the level of destruction met by Norfolk, nor did Petersburg suffer quite the physical damage Lee implies. Just one year later, for example, the Marquis de Chastellux commented: "[B]efore I left Petersburg I noted that it was already a flourishing town and that it will become more so, as its situation is very favorable for trade," though he added that he thought the climate unhealthy--a sentiment offered by many travellers to southern towns.⁵⁷

Despite the lack of significant physical damage, however, trade recovery after the war was slow, owing to the complete destruction of Norfolk--Petersburg's primary trading partner--and to the British naval presence throughout the war years. British officer Thomas Anburey explained:

The tobacco warehouses at Petersburg as well as at Richmond, are crowded with that commodity, as they cannot find purchasers....some few merchants have ventured small sloops to the Bermuda Islands and have been successful, it is only these who have any commodities in their stores, the rest being shut up; and I cannot help making the same reflection, at seeing such towns as Petersburg and Richmond in the same state as that of Lancaster, all trade being at a stand in these places, where no doubt, before the war, it must have been very considerable,

⁵⁶ Willie Graham and Mark R. Wenger, Battersea: A Historical and Architectural Study, (Historic Petersburg Foundation, 1988), p. I-10.

⁵⁷ Chastellux, p. 426.

these two towns having formerly supplied the back settlers with all manner of stores for their plantations.⁵⁸

In response to the economic slowdown, residents and merchants of Petersburg, Blandford, and Pocahontas petitioned for the legislature to incorporate the three towns into one borough. In 1784 the three villages, along with an area on the southwest side of Petersburg called Ravenscroft, were incorporated as the town of Petersburg, centralizing local economic resources and making the city a more imposing political force within the colony. Describing Petersburg's expansion, Reps concludes that the "law enlarging the powers of municipality and establishing the details of local government indicates the extent to which the community had prospered and grown."⁵⁹ Importantly, incorporation also reflected the changing nature of the local economy.

Isaac's description of the "transformation" that occurred during the late colonial period aptly describes Petersburg's evolution from a gentry-controlled, mono-dimensional tobacco economy:

In 1740, an integrated set of symbols had served to shape the awareness of those Virginians who could be drawn or coerced into entering the consensus that was expressed in land boundaries, tobacco warehouses, courthouses and churches....by the 1790s affairs were greatly changed: diverse cultural and counter-cultural possibilities had manifestly appeared to fracture shared definitions and ways of seeing things.⁶⁰

After the war Petersburg continued to expand as a diversified commercial marketplace aimed at meeting the needs of a growing and increasingly wealthy regional population. Surprisingly, the town's development, like that

⁵⁸ Anburey, p. 357.

⁵⁹ Reps, 222.

⁶⁰ Isaac, 320-322.

of Virginia's other fall line cities, has largely gone unrecognized by social and economic historians. Recent studies of southern urbanization often perpetuate the traditional assumption that the colonial Tidewater region remained, for the most part, commercially under-developed. Typical is the assessment offered by Carlville Earle and Ronald Hoffman: "All crafts and professional activity remained essentially decentralized with the exception of Williamsburg and Annapolis, which attracted luxury craftsmen who catered to the resident British officials and the social elite that visited the capitals during the political season."⁶¹ As this study will clearly demonstrate, however, such a view grossly misinterprets Petersburg's economy at the time of the Revolution and completely overlooks the establishment of an extensive local trade community. Though without question, prior to 1750 Virginia was largely dependent on imported manufactures, this generalization becomes less tenable. By 1776, as Lois Carr argues, "there was extensive network of local industry that supplemented imports."⁶² Emerging as a dominant regional marketplace, the town served as *the* commercial center for many Virginia counties south of the James River, as well as for parts of northern North Carolina.⁶³

⁶¹ Earle and Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urbanization in the Eighteenth-Century South," p. 24.

⁶² Carr, p. 342.

⁶³ In eighteenth-century North Carolina, largely impassable waterways resulted in slow development of substantial communities and reliance on outside trade.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY TRADE IN PETERSBURG: AN ANALYSIS OF FURNITURE - MAKING

In her pioneering study of free craftsmen in the rural Chesapeake, Jean B. Russo discerns several meaningful patterns that can be used here to better understand the nature of trade development in colonial Petersburg.⁶⁴ Russo found that from the late seventeenth through the late eighteenth century, Talbot County, Maryland supported a small nucleus of essential trades: including carpenters, coopers, wheelwrights, sawyers and joiners, shoemakers, tanners, and saddlers; tailors and weavers; and blacksmiths, bricklayers, and shipbuilders. Only toward the end of this period were these tradespeople joined by more specialized artisans--including furniture-makers--whose products and services could only be supported by a more fully developed economy. Countering the argument that Virginia's relative lack of urban development and its fluctuating economy left planters little alternative but to develop their own small trade communities, Russo argues that a broad range of trade activity evolved in the Chesapeake region. "The fundamental outlines of the craft sector," she concludes, "were thus determined by the county's relationship to the international market and by the level of local economic development, rather than by the efforts of individual planters to develop self-sufficient plantations."⁶⁵ Accordingly, Petersburg's evolution as

⁶⁴ Arguably, gender-specific terms such as "tradesmen" and "craftsmen" accurately portray the vast majority of Virginia furniture artisans. However, the documented appearance of several Virginia women in the furniture trades suggests the use of less specific terms. "Tradespeople" and "craftspeople" allow for such variances and will be used in this paper.

⁶⁵ Jean B. Russo, "Self-sufficiency and Local Exchange: Free Craftsmen in the Rural Chesapeake Economy," in Colonial Chesapeake Society, Ed. Carr, Morgan and Russo, p. 402.

an urban center with wide-ranging commercial connections would logically surpass that of smaller tobacco towns like those in Talbot County, where certain trades were "unlikely prospects, needing the support of a large and wealthy urban population or a substantial external market."⁶⁶

By 1780 increasingly specialized trades were established in Petersburg to serve the growing local and regional population. These included cabinetmaking and coachmaking; plastering and painting; silver, tin, and goldsmithing. Mercantile operations expanded as well. As a port with international commercial affiliations, Petersburg became a regional center for the distribution of products such as textiles, medicines, and ceramics--items not readily available from local sources. These wares were sold in a growing number of general "stores" which offered a wide variety of materials. However, truly specialized retail stores, such as stationers, druggists, or linendrapers could only be found in America's largest cities--including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and to a lesser extent Norfolk and Williamsburg--suggesting that while Petersburg emerged as an important regional market, its national role nevertheless remained limited by comparison.⁶⁷

A closer look at merchandise sold in Petersburg's retail stores indicates the broad range of outside materials imported to satisfy the needs of area clients. By 1773, John Thompson of Petersburg was able to offer a large variety of wares from London including mechanical and surgical instruments, business and medical books, trimmings for hats, "East Indian" foods such as mangoes, English foods such as walnuts, and a variety of "pills" and "new

⁶⁶ Russo, p. 394.

⁶⁷ Anburey, p. 357.

discovered medicines."⁶⁸ During the same period, Alexander Strachan's shop offered: "A Fresh Assortment of DRUGS and MEDICINES, chymical and galenical; Tooth and Flesh Brushes; marble mortars; cut Smelling Bottles, Ditto in cases; Nipple glasses; breast pipes; Lead Pots, Crucibles, &c." in addition to "small chests of Medicines, with Directions proper for Families."⁶⁹ By the late 1770s, large selections of French textiles were being imported directly into Petersburg as well.⁷⁰

Particularly active in the South, as noted above, were the Scottish trading interests. For example, "Buchanan, Hunter, & Co." had headquarters in New York and Petersburg, the latter run locally by David Buchanan. In return for cash crops, this operation provided a wide range of European imports--including tea; small wooden tea chests; textiles, including hats and linens; and an assortment of specialty metalwares, among them scissors, shoe and knee buckles, dining utensils, thimbles and "knitting pins." Many of these goods clearly were meant for domestic use. Other imports, however, arrived to meet the needs of local artisans. By the 1760s tradespeople--including furniture-makers--had access to a wide range of paints, pigments, "Lacker" and "shining brown" varnishes, gold and silver leaf, and "Dyers woods" like logwood, redwood and madder for making stains.⁷¹ David Buchanan imported a diverse assortment of tools for carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, plasterers,

⁶⁸ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, check June 1773. mid

⁶⁹ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, check June 1773 late

⁷⁰ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, (Purdie), September 19, 1777, 1-1.

⁷¹ Messrs. Hay, Stevenson & Co. Account, March 2, 1784, Buchanan Hamilton & Co Invoice Book, 1784, Public Records Office, Chancery Lane (London) C114/117, pt. 3, no. 7. Thanks to Nancy Hagedorn of Colonial Williamsburg for this information.

brickmasons, and cabinetmakers, as well as furniture hardware and nails, some of which was specifically meant for sale in southern markets.⁷²

Petersburg's pre-Revolutionary *retail* development was matched by the growth of local trades. Indeed, the town's emerging furniture-making community offers a valid model through which to discern broader patterns of *artisan* development. As with Petersburg's early history in general, however, substantial record losses inhibit a complete understanding of pre-Revolutionary artisan activity. The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts has identified a number of "joiners" and "carpenters"--builders of houses and other essential wooden wares who also may have produced rudimentary furniture forms--working in the Prince George County area prior to 1760. The first published reference to the specialized trade of "cabinetmaker" in Petersburg does not occur until 1766 and had to be published in Williamsburg's Virginia Gazette, because a local newspaper did not appear until the mid-1780s. With the town's steady urbanization after the middle of the eighteenth century came the social and economic means to support an expanded range of woodworking trades, including cabinetmaking. Indeed, Virginia's other emerging river towns, such as Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Alexandria, experienced similar patterns. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that

⁷² David Buchanan Account, February 22, 1785, Buchanan, Hamilton & Co., Sales book, 1784, Public Records Office, Chancery Lane (London), C114/117, pt. 3, no. 6. Thanks to Nancy Hagedorn for this information. Buchanan's later correspondence to Scottish merchant Duncan Hunter warned British merchants to be aware of American regional preferences for certain wares. For example, a shipment of nails originally intended for New York in the 1780s was re-routed to Petersburg, since, as Buchanan explained, they were "all flats & of course unsaleable at New York." He went on to write that he thought sales in general would be profitable in Petersburg: "Goods in this state continue to be scarce & unless the importations made in course of the summer are very great....there is no doubt of good sales....it is really not my opinion that there will be any overstock."

economic development in such towns lagged far behind that in the more densely populated and industrially advanced North, where highly specialized trades such as carvers, upholsterers, and "painter-gilders," were more commonly employed at an early date.⁷³

Before examining Petersburg's early furniture-making history it is essential to recognize established traditions in Virginia. Until the Revolution, Virginia's landed gentry, like most of its population, was of British origin and documents reveal that buyers primarily sought furniture in the British taste.⁷⁴ However, prior to the establishment of Williamsburg in 1699, there existed few Virginia communities large enough to support full-time local furniture-makers. While residents could commission a local turner, joiner, or carpenter to construct a chair or table, most relied on the tobacco trade networks with Britain for fashionable wares. Wealthy citizens like William Byrd I and William Fitzhugh placed numerous furniture orders to British merchants, but because of the high cost involved, this option was available only to the rich.⁷⁵ The vast majority of Virginians were servants or poor farmers, and their few surviving inventories suggest that they either commissioned or built themselves a few basic functional furniture forms, such as tables and chairs or benches. Though these vernacular wares do not fit into the urban furniture-making context of this analysis, they comprise a sadly understudied group of objects that deserves more consideration.

⁷³ Hurst, p. 22.

⁷⁴ Stylistically and structurally, most Virginia urban furniture resembles the academically inspired productions of provincial English artisans, as well as Irish and Scottish tradespeople, rather than upper level London manufactures.

⁷⁵ John Bivins, The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820, (Winston-Salem: The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1988), p. 95. Byrd ordered furniture in 1690, and Fitzhugh in 1716.

While wealthy Virginians continued their massive importation of British goods into the eighteenth century, the cities of Williamsburg and Norfolk emerged as furniture-making centers in the colony. Wallace Gusler's Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790, one of the earliest specialized studies of the cabinetmaking traditions in a southern town, cogently proves that by the middle of the eighteenth century, cabinetwares based on British urban designs and styled to meet the demands of Virginia's gentry were available from Williamsburg furniture-makers.⁷⁶ Hurst discerns a similar level of cabinetmaking activity in Norfolk, Virginia's only major coastal port. In 1775 Norfolk's population was roughly three times that of Williamsburg and, despite its complete destruction by fire during the Revolutionary War, surviving documents and objects suggest that a broad range of sophisticated cabinetwares were available both for local use and, importantly, for export throughout southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. Any thorough accounting of urban cabinetmaking in pre-Revolutionary Virginia must necessarily recognize the traditions of Norfolk and Williamsburg, the colony's two most influential early cities.

By the start of the Revolution, Williamsburg and Norfolk supported roughly the same number of artisans; the capital's smaller permanent population was offset by its status as the political and social center of the colony.⁷⁷ During political seasons an impermanent population of wealthy planters and politicians carried Williamsburg cabinetwares to many parts of eastern Virginia.⁷⁸ By contrast Norfolk, along with Charleston, South

⁷⁶ Wallace B. Gusler, Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1820, (Richmond: Virginia Museum, 1979).

⁷⁷ Hurst, p. 15.

⁷⁸ Gusler, pp. 4-5 and passim.

Carolina, served as a major international port for much of the coastal South and as the main trade intermediary for the growing upriver towns of Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Petersburg.⁷⁹ These trade connections almost certainly disseminated some Norfolk-made cabinetwares to other parts of Virginia, especially to those directly accessible by major estuaries.

It is important to remember, however, that in colonial eastern Virginia, cities were the exception rather than the rule. The evolution of urban centers--and with them cabinetmaking centers--was limited by the region's demographic evolution, which was shaped by a rather single-minded commitment to the production of tobacco and other staple crops. Most Virginians, both rich and poor, lived in relatively isolated rural areas. When possible, they patronized Virginia artisans, however they also continued to import large quantities of British wares as well. Indeed, with few population centers to support local manufactures, Virginians relied on tobacco trade routes with Britain and British ports in the West Indies to supply the vast majority of their material needs. Notably, such a pattern differed from that of New England where, for example, a lack of substantial staple crops resulted in fewer international trade connections; as a result, local manufacturing traditions, including furniture-making, were established earlier than in the South.⁸⁰ To maintain the market for imports, Virginia mercantile operations, including those in early Petersburg, kept residents constantly apprised of the latest fashions from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin and other important British style centers. Although many of the colonists were fourth

⁷⁹ Wertenbaker, pp. 75, 83.

⁸⁰ For an analysis of broader economic patterns throughout the British Colonies, see Jack L. Greene, Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

or fifth generation Virginians, deeply rooted cultural ties to Britain continued to shape almost every aspect of their lives and led to the development of British-influenced cabinetmaking traditions, which in turn became the common denominator for furniture produced throughout the Tidewater area. In short, even with the emergence of local cabinetmaking centers, Virginia's urban furniture-making communities were both directly and indirectly influenced by British traditions.

British furniture-making methods were transferred to Virginia in several ways. First, a number of immigrant artisans, recognizing the profitability of catering to the colony's wealthy tobacco aristocracy, cultivated British methods of construction and design. In fact, the advertisements of artisans such as Benjamin Bucktrout of Williamsburg, or James McCormick--who ended his varied career in Petersburg--suggest that they saw great advantage in telling Virginians of their British training. Once in America, these cabinetmakers passed traditional British cabinetmaking practices onto the numerous journeymen and apprentices who served in their shops. British tastes also infiltrated the colony via the vast quantity of imported furniture, which could directly serve as design prototypes for local artisans. For example, a Petersburg cabinetmaker, who around the time of the Revolution built a number of pembroke tables with distinctive guttae feet, may well have based the design on a British prototype. Indeed, other southern cabinetmakers, including artisans in New Bern, North Carolina and those at the Anthony Hay shop in Williamsburg also made guttae-foot furniture based on British sources.⁸¹ A similar transfer of traditions appears in a Petersburg

⁸¹ One of the Petersburg examples (MESDA file S-7133) has a tradition of ownership at "Violet Bank" in Chesterfield County, directly across the Appomattox from Petersburg. An identical table from the same shop (MESDA

chair made for John Randolph, a famed Virginia political participant, a design that clearly follows British prototypes.⁸²

Yet another means of transporting European furniture-making traditions to the Tidewater area were architectural treatises, such as William Salmon's Palladio Londinensis, and cabinetmaking design books, such as Thomas Chippendale's Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director. For example,

file S-12146) was purchased this century in Petersburg. For the North Carolina examples, see Bivins, North Carolina, pp. 400-407. For the Williamsburg examples, Gusler, Antiques article.

Gusler includes a pembroke table that descended in the St. George Tucker family as part of the Williamsburg group. Available evidence brings into question this attribution. Tables adorned with guttae feet were produced in a variety of southern centers, not just Williamsburg, and, in fact, no other recorded tables from that city can be directly related to the Tucker example. Both aesthetically and structurally it is more closely related to Petersburg examples. Indeed, Gusler also recorded a table with nearly identical legs and a pierced stretcher arrangement that descended in Nottoway County, just below Petersburg.

Tucker's settlement history supports a Petersburg attribution as well. Upon completing his law degree at the College of William & Mary in 1774 and a one year stint as a attorney in the Petersburg/Southside area, Tucker ran out of funds and returned to his native Bermuda. He was again in the colonies in 1777, but business kept him travelling for most of that year. For that brief period, Tucker is known to have purchased a "washstand" and a "leather covered trunk" from Richard Booker, a Williamsburg cabinetmaker in 1778--forms that suggest the need for lightweight or portable possessions. In 1778, Tucker married Frances Bland Randolph, a wealthy widow whose home was Matoax in Chesterfield County, just outside of Petersburg. He moved into Matoax and remained in there until 1788, during which time he came to own a considerable amount of property in the area. After Frances's death that year, Tucker moved the family and the furnishings of Matoax to Williamsburg--well after the demise of that town's considerable cabinetmaking traditions. That year he married Lelia Carter Skipwith, daughter of Sir Peyton and Lady Jean Skipwith who lived at Prestwoud in Mecklenburg County and whose patronage of Samuel White's cabinetmaking shop in Petersburg is documented later in this thesis.

In short, the outstanding documentary evidence suggests that Tucker's financial difficulties and his transient lifestyle prior to 1778 would have prevented the acquisition of most permanent household furnishings--a tenet supported by the closer relationship of his pembroke table to Petersburg rather than Williamsburg examples. See Gusler, Williamsburg, pp. 139-141 for a further discussion of the Tucker table and see footnote 1, p. 147, for information on the Nottoway County table.

⁸² CWF 1933-12.

listed in the 1776 estate inventory of Williamsburg cabinetmaker Edmund Dickenson is a copy of the latter book described as "Chippendales Designs."⁸³ Importantly, Alexander Taylor, who began his cabinetmaking career in Petersburg just after the Revolutionary War, also owned Chippendale's work. Interestingly, after his death in 1805, that particular volume was inherited by Alexander Taylor, Jr., who by that time was his business partner. When the younger Taylor died in 1820, the book was offered for public sale and, although nearly seventy years old, was described as "one hundred and sixty copper-plate designs of the most elegant designs of household furniture."⁸⁴

That Petersburg's early cabinetmakers were primarily influenced by British traditions is abundantly evident. Thanks to record losses, however, it is more difficult to discern specific details concerning the business activities of individual artisans. Only after Petersburg's incorporation with Blandford and Pocohantas in 1784 and subsequent legislative reforms in 1786 did local record keeping of any substance begin. Improved tax records provided specific information concerning each member the household. They listed, among other things, ownership of horses, livestock, ordinary licenses, and billiard tables.

Documentation of the town's commercial activities were also greatly improved with the establishment of the first local newspaper in 1786. The

⁸³ Gusler convincingly argues that this book was a part of the Anthony Hay Shop prior to Dickenson's tenure as Master Cabinetmaker that began in 1771. As evidence, he notes the striking similarity of the lower half of the Masonic Master's Chair made by Benjamin Bucktrout, Dickenson's predecessor, to plate 21 in Chippendale's Gentlemen's and Cabinet-Makers Director of 1762 (third edition).

⁸⁴ Petersburg Republican, May 5, 1820, 1-2. As Bivins notes (p. 400), the aforementioned guttae feet and canted legs--also found on North Carolina examples--represent designs from Chippendale's Director and serve as further evidence of its regional influence.

Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, was published by Miles Hunter and William Prentis, Williamsburg printers who relocated after the removal of the capitol to Richmond. By 1800 the town supported five local newspapers.

Prior to the introduction of the town's first newspaper, Petersburg tradespeople had to advertise through newspapers in Norfolk, Williamsburg, and for a brief period, Richmond. Advertising, however, was primarily used by retail merchants who imported wares, such as ceramics, tools, textiles, books, that were difficult to obtain locally. As a rule urban cabinetmakers in the pre-Revolutionary South rarely advertised their wares in other cities; most had neither the production capabilities nor the means of transportation to make exporting profitable. Indeed, many artisans working in southern urban centers did not advertise their manufactures, instead probably relying on word-of-mouth endorsements from local clients. Typical, for example, is Peter Scott of Williamsburg, whose public notices primarily dealt with personal or legal matters, or with the hiring of additional workers.

What southern furniture-makers did look to other cities for, however, were apprentices and "journeymen," the latter term indicating artisans who had completed their apprenticeships. Several employment advertisements placed by early Petersburg furniture-makers in Williamsburg's Virginia Gazette reflect this practice. In 1766 Thomas Arbuthnot advertised for "ONE or two journeymen CABINETMAKERS, who are sober and industrious, and understand their business well."⁸⁵ Arbuthnot, who worked in Blandford, first appears in the Bristol Parish records one year earlier, when he offered inexpensive coffins to local parishioners.⁸⁶ After moving his shop to Hanover

⁸⁵ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, (Purdie), June 13, 1766, 3-1.

⁸⁶ The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish Virginia, 1720-1789, pp. 202, 213.

in 1775, Arbuthnot placed an advertisement that confidently assured his customers that they "may be supplied with all Sort of Cabinet Work."⁸⁷ If, in fact, his shop could support several journeymen--in addition to a number of apprentices as was the common practice--then he ran an operation not too different in size from the known Williamsburg or Norfolk shops. William Stainback, who worked in Petersburg for almost fifty years, also advertised in the Williamsburg Gazette. In 1772, he offered encouragement for "one or two CABINET and CHAIR MAKERS" to apply for employment, adding that he would pay them weekly.⁸⁸ In sum, though local pre-Revolutionary newspapers are not available to document the trade, evidence from other Virginia newspapers indicates that Petersburg supported a relatively large and diverse cabinetmaking community.

Eastern Virginia's established cities supplied Petersburg and other emerging fall-line towns with more than just publications in which to advertise; regional cabinetmaking centers, particularly Norfolk and Williamsburg, clearly produced a steady flow of apprentices and journeymen, not all of whom could remain employed where they were trained. Unfortunately, few surviving records exist to shed light on the movement of these artisans. For example, advertisements and tax records rarely list the names of apprentices and journeymen. Thus it is not clear where early Petersburg furniture-makers like Arbuthnot and Stainback received their training. In spite of the minimal written records, however, it is possible to reach a number of meaningful conclusions regarding the influence of nearby furniture-making centers by also taking into account physical evidence in

⁸⁷ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, (Dixon and Hunter), June 17, 1775, 3-1.

⁸⁸ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, (Purdie and Dixon), December 3, 1772, 2-3

the design and construction of local furniture wares. By adapting the structuralist approach of scholars like Gusler, it is possible to identify the distinctive regional and shop practices favored by Petersburg artisans and passed down through journeymen and apprentices. When both documentary and physical evidence is considered, it is clear that the furniture-making traditions of Norfolk exerted the strongest influence on the trade in Petersburg.

The earliest known Norfolk furniture-maker to relocate to Petersburg was John Selden. A native of nearby Hampton, he trained and worked in Norfolk for nearly twenty years before his cabinet shop was lost during the catastrophic series of fires in 1776, which consumed the entire city. Six months after this catastrophe, Selden notified eastern Virginia residents through Williamsburg's Virginia Gazette that he had relocated near Blandford, "where he carries on the CABINET-MAKING business, as formerly, in all its branches."⁸⁹ Selden's work, some of which was made for the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg, is documented by several signed objects. Characteristic of these wares is the use of "neat and plain" exteriors and thoughtfully structured interiors, Anglo-influenced features commonly found on urban Tidewater furniture.⁹⁰ Selden undoubtedly brought the neat and plain style with him to Petersburg; not surprisingly, many of the British-influenced structural features common to his work appear on early Petersburg furniture. He was in Blandford for just one year before he died. His apprenticeship dates suggest he was under forty years of age.

⁸⁹ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, (Purdie), July 26, 1776, 4-1.

⁹⁰ Hurst, p. 134. "Neat and plain" describes an English furniture style published by Chippendale and popular in Virginia. Its main features include the use of relatively plain exterior surfaces with minimal carved ornamentation save for architecturally inspired moldings and details.

Nevertheless, his furniture-making legacy continued with the arrival of John McCloud, one of Selden's apprentices, who established a shop in Blandford after the War.

Norfolk traditions also arrived in the Petersburg area via John McCormick, a British native who had previously worked in Baltimore, Alexandria, and Norfolk. McComick spent the final years of his career in Blandford. John Ventus, a free black, apprenticed in Norfolk with a joiner, William Boushell, beginning in 1787. By 1813 he was in Petersburg and within a few years was involved in a successful cabinetmaking partnership with John Raymond, another free black. In short, Norfolk's role as a primary trading partner, in addition to its direct cabinetmaking links, strongly suggest that the furniture-making traditions of Virginia's largest port had a major impact on the evolution of Petersburg furniture-making.⁹¹

For several reasons the influence of Williamsburg's cabinet trade, a topic well documented in Gusler's study, is by contrast more difficult to trace. To start with, it is necessary to place that town's cabinetmaking traditions in their proper cultural context. According to Gusler, Williamsburg was *the* primary cabinetmaking center in colonial Virginia. Its cabinetwares, he concludes, were disseminated across a large part of the colony.⁹² To be sure Williamsburg's British-influenced cabinetwares were purchased by Jefferson, Washington, and other affluent Virginians who frequented the capitol and were united by their participation in the legal and political affairs of the colony. For these wealthy and well-travelled patrons, Williamsburg may well have served as the main source for fashionable furniture wares. However,

⁹¹ See Biographic Sketches for John McCloud, James McCormick, John Selden, and John Ventus.

⁹² Gusler, p. 6.

they represent only a small minority of the colony's furniture buying population. Research since Gusler's pioneering study has revealed that many other Virginians--urban and rural, rich and poor--purchased their furniture from a broad range of cabinet shops located throughout the colony.⁹³

While Williamsburg's importance as an early Virginia cabinetmaking center is without question, it is also clear that a steady arrival of immigrant artisans throughout the eighteenth century, in addition to the simultaneous development of Virginia's inland counties, resulted in the movement of British furniture-making traditions directly to cities and rural areas well *beyond* Williamsburg. Notably, many artisans arrived at the main port of Norfolk, some staying there, others moving inland, and most bringing with them the same British methods of construction and design that served as the foundations for Williamsburg's cabinetmakers. As a result only a small portion of the "Britishness" of Tidewater furniture can be identified as the influence of the Williamsburg school.⁹⁴

⁹³ See, for example, Luke Beckerdite, "A Virginia Cabinetmaker: The Eventon Shop and Related Work." Journal of the Museum of Southern Decorative Arts, (hereafter called JMESDA) Vol. X, No. 2, (November, 1984): pp. 1-33, and Luke Beckerdite, "Style and Technology Shifts in One Virginia Shop." JMESDA, Vol. IX, No. 2, (November, 1983): pp. 21-42. The numerous early urban and rural shops identified by John Bivins in his examination of nearby North Carolina, The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820, offers further testimony to the range of shops in the Tidewater region.

⁹⁴ While several pre-Revolutionary Williamsburg tradespeople followed the lead of colleagues like Hunter, Prestis, and silversmith James Geddy, by relocating to Petersburg, no documented examples appear among furniture-makers. Between 1740 and 1775 Williamsburg annually supported two or three cabinetmaking shops, with higher numbers in the later years. It is probable that some apprentices and journeymen associated with these shops relocated to Petersburg. Indeed, specific Williamsburg furniture traditions were incorporated by Petersburg makers; further research regarding other local groups will likely document other influences. For example, a large group of case pieces produced in the Petersburg area, including a chest (1967-99) and a desk (1987-14) may have been influenced by Williamsburg models.

Both the chest (1967-99) and the desk (1987-14) are part of the collection at Colonial Williamsburg. For a discussion of related Williamsburg examples

In spite of Williamsburg's considerable role in colonial Virginia, after the middle of the eighteenth century--while other urban trading centers continued to expand--the town experienced minimal growth and remained above all a political and cultural center. Williamsburg's relative lack of commercial trade activity was due, in part, to its location on the center of a peninsula that offered limited overland routes and accessibility to the nearby

see Gusler, pp. 115-131 and figs. 75-78. Recently, Colonial Williamsburg acquired a clothespress (1991-107) from the same Williamsburg shop; the lower drawered section has a finely planed walnut top joined to the sides with the same blind-dovetail joint found on the other chests; the press section appears to be a very early addition. The Williamsburg examples have in common the use of a composite block foot, a feature used by artisans in that town and, to date, not recorded in Petersburg. Additionally, the desks share a distinctive interior design.

The Petersburg group, based on an attribution first suggested by Ronald L. Hurst of Colonial Williamsburg, consists of nearly a dozen case pieces that appear to have been directly influenced by the Williamsburg group, but make use of vertically-laminated blocking behind each bracket foot--an unusual feature found on later Petersburg case furniture such as a bow-front chest of drawers at Colonial Williamsburg (1990-249) and a bow-front clothespress, now at Centre-Hill Museum in Petersburg. A desk at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond that descended in the Peter Jones family of Amelia County may reflect the earliest Petersburg interpretation of this design. While employing a desk interior mirroring the Williamsburg models, it uses the vertically laminated foot blocking. Also in the Petersburg group, then, are figures 87 and 88 in Gusler, one with no history and the other having descended in the Michel family of Mecklenburg County--a Southside county for which Petersburg served as the market center (the other example cited by Gusler, CW1938-44, is not from the shop and represents a rather less academic interpretation of the form). Colonial Williamsburg also has another identical chest of drawers (L1983-342), as well as a desk-and-bookcase (1991-433) that employs a simpler desk interior design than the one used by the Williamsburg maker. A nearly identical desk-and-bookcase, recorded by MESDA (S-7168), descended in the Gilliam family of Dinwiddie County. A nearly identical desk (privately owned and dated in chalk "1802") was purchased in Petersburg earlier in this century and is now privately owned. For other Petersburg examples see MESDA files S-6525, S-14592, and S-7620. Closely related to these forms--and probably from the same shop--is a chest of drawers (S-5841) that descended in Sussex County, south of Petersburg. A chest with a Orange County, North Carolina history (S-3019) has replaced feet and blocking, making it difficult to determine its origin.

In general, however, such ties are difficult to document, which is all the more surprising since Williamsburg's social and economic decline after the 1780 removal of the capitol to Richmond coincided with a period of considerable growth for Petersburg. In fact, during this period the city offered enterprising tradespeople a rapidly expanding market for their wares.

major waterways. In other words, Williamsburg was not a port town and the town's movement of commerce to and from the inland centers was greatly restricted. In 1783 Johann David Schoepf said of Williamsburg, "the trade of this place was never great, its distance from navigable waters not being favorable to more active affairs which thus became established in smaller towns."⁹⁵ These sentiments were reiterated by St. George Tucker, a resident and booster of the town.⁹⁶ Unquestionably, Williamsburg artisans produced some wares for export to other parts of Virginia, movement achieved without being a terminus for the colony's extensive agricultural trading network.

Unlike other Virginia urban centers, Williamsburg was a place where local artisans primarily met the needs of a rather specific clientele--a group defined by their shared affluence, participation in the legal and political affairs of the colony, and an ability or need to travel into the capitol city. Certainly, many of Virginia's most ambitious and artistically significant furniture wares were produced by Williamsburg's highly skilled cabinetmakers. However, the common denominator for furniture made in eastern Virginia's colonial urban centers lies *not* in its stylistic and structural dependence on Williamsburg prototypes, but rather in its deeply-rooted cultural allegiance to British traditions. Furthermore, the preponderance of evidence, in the form of socio-economic patterns and surviving furniture, suggests that Petersburg, Norfolk, Richmond, Fredericksburg, and other port towns served as independent regional furniture-making centers joined by a common allegiance to the production of staple crops--a network from which Williamsburg was largely excluded. Such trade patterns served as vital

⁹⁵ Schoepf, p. 81.

⁹⁶ Mary Haldane Coleman, St. George Tucker: A Citizen of No Mean City

indicators of larger socio-economic relationships in colonial Virginia. That Norfolk, and not Williamsburg, likely exerted the strongest influence on Petersburg's early furniture-making traditions testifies not to the size or quality of cabinetmaking in the former capital, but rather to the vital linkages of Virginia's largest port to its upriver partners--including Petersburg, Richmond and Fredericksburg, centers which effectively served as Norfolk's trade satellites. Furthermore, Hurst's study clearly documents that the appearance of generic British construction and design features on Norfolk wares reflects an allegiance common throughout eastern Virginia, a society that in general retained significant cultural and economic bonds to the mother country. After the middle of the eighteenth century, Petersburg and Virginia's other upriver port towns rapidly became important centers for the continued distribution of British furniture-making traditions to other parts of the colony. As historian Allen Kulikoff notes, these cities "commanded the business of a vast hinterland that sent them tobacco and grain and received manufactures in return,"⁹⁷ In the same way that Norfolk supplied cabinet wares and artisans to its trade satellites, Petersburg served as the furniture-making center for its own inland community. Indeed, by the time of the Revolution, the town was a primary source of cabinetwares for many of the interior counties that were accessible via the Appomattox River and the major overland trade or postal routes.

A group of case pieces attributable to Petersburg document the city's role as an important pre-Revolutionary cabinetmaking center--as well as its cultural and economic ties to other Virginia towns and Great Britain. Included are a desk and chest, both owned and signed by members of the Elliott family

⁹⁷ Kulikoff, pp. 124-125.

of Prince Edward County, located upriver from Petersburg. The pieces' sophisticated construction and design--including fluted quarter columns and document drawers with fluted and decoratively stamped faces--clearly place them in the general school of British-influenced, "neat and plain" furniture common to urban tidewater cabinetmaking centers. However, these case pieces do not fit into any known Williamsburg, Norfolk, or coastal North Carolina groups and instead reflect the emergence of a specific Petersburg interpretation of a British design. Another desk from the same shop has a well documented Petersburg history. Importantly, it exhibits an added bookcase section which relates it to yet another school of Petersburg cabinetmaking. A third desk in this group descended in a longtime Cumberland County family and, in fact, is signed by several of the early owners.⁹⁸ Cumberland, too, was an upriver county that relied on Petersburg as its primary market center. This group reflects Petersburg's cultivation of its own furniture-making style, one, however, that speaks strongly of its intimate cultural and economic ties to Norfolk and Great Britain.

It is evident, then, that cabinetmaking was well established in Petersburg by the time of the Revolutionary War. Furniture wares were not only marketed for local consumption, but also for an extensive surrounding population, a system which mirrored larger patterns of regional trade. Furthermore, Petersburg's specific furniture productions had both direct and indirect connections with those of other Virginia production centers and with

⁹⁸ The desk belongs to Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (accession #1980-80). The chest is at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, S-9066. Both examples are illustrated in Patricia A. Piorowski, Piedmont Virginia Furniture: Product of Provincial Cabinetmakers () The desk with added bookcase is listed in the MESDA files, S-3591. Also in the MESDA records is the Cumberland example, S-7242.

Great Britain. In years to come, these patterns would change as a result of political and economic developments both in America and Europe.

THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE WAR AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS TO 1800

After the Revolutionary War, Petersburg experienced considerable growth, while at the same time it also retained its "tobacco culture" character. The Virginia Census of 1790 reveals that the town had an overall population of almost 3000 people, making it the third largest population center in Virginia. However, nearly half were slaves, the highest percentage of any city in the state. This statistic reflects Petersburg's continued economic reliance on the processing, inspection, and shipping of tobacco and grains--commerce highly dependent on the use of slaves. The 1790 Census also reveals that Petersburg had more free blacks than any other town in Virginia, nearly ten percent of its population. Between 1790 and 1810 the free black population of Petersburg nearly tripled, development which ended with the tightening of manumission laws in 1806.⁹⁹ Many, in fact, were tradespeople living in segregated sections of Blandford and Pocohantas. It is important to remember, however, that the term "free" when applied to black citizens carried a limited meaning.

Virtually all blacks in Virginia lived under severe social and economic limitations that greatly reduced their ability to participate in the local economy, a fundamental flaw common to many southern cities where the primary export was dependent on slave labor. For example, nearby Fredericksburg showed early signs of developing a stable and diversified local economy, but the town's reliance on slavery and the production of staple crops slowed the process considerably.¹⁰⁰ Its large black population resulted in a lack of active consumers and a relatively low number of skilled artisans found stable employment.¹⁰¹ Indeed, a general shortage of white artisans in

⁹⁹ Lebsack, p. 91.

¹⁰⁰ Siener, p. 6.

¹⁰¹ Siener, p. 31.

Virginia prompted the state's lawmakers in 1792 to exempt artisans migrating to the state from all taxes--except land taxes--for a period of five years.¹⁰² As with Fredericksburg, Petersburg's economic development was significantly shaped, and in some respects restricted, by its reliance on slave-generated cash crops.

Because of the limitations blacks had as consumers, then, early overall population figures for Petersburg do not serve as accurate indicators of economic activity, as might be the case in towns with a more equitable distribution of wealth. Reflecting Petersburg's earliest socio-economic arrangement, a small number of extraordinarily influential landholding families continued to control a disproportionate percentage of the town's wealth. At the time of the Revolution, the Bollings and Banisters remained among the most dominant Petersburg families. Much of the Bolling wealth came from the ownership and rental of a large portion of the commercial and residential districts; the Banisters continued to operate as large-scale planters.¹⁰³ Suzanne Lebsock's analysis of women in early Petersburg reveals that in 1790, the top ten percent of Petersburg's 372 taxpayers controlled over one half of the town's taxable property, and that the upper fifty percent controlled over ninety percent of the taxable wealth. In other words, "the rich stayed rich while the poor grew more numerous."¹⁰⁴

Economic inconsistencies manifested themselves in other ways as well, even in the construction of new and apparently progressive commercial ventures. For example, local merchants recognized the advantages of

¹⁰² Zeno, p. 17.

¹⁰³ Willie Graham and Mark R. Wenger, Battersea: A Historical and Architectural Study, Volume 1, (a report prepared for the Friends of Battersea Committee, Historic Petersburg Foundation, Inc., August 1988), p. I-12.

¹⁰⁴ Lebsock, p. 7.

centralizing Petersburg's food-related businesses and by 1785, established a temporary marketplace offering both a small building as well as riverfront access for venders. Earle and Hoffman note that a variety of factors, including soil concerns, market demand, staple flows and transportation requirements, migratory patterns at all levels of society, farm income levels, European wars, and a shortage of food in the Atlantic world, affected the development of Virginia's fall line cities.¹⁰⁵ Petersburg responded by constructing a large, permanent market house in 1787 on or near the site of Robert Bolling's 1730 tobacco warehouse--a structure that had been so influential in the early shaping of the town. While this venture further strengthened Petersburg's role as a regional commercial center and brought more commercial activity to the town, economic instability resulted from the popular southern use of promissory notes as legal tender, a non-cash system in which the non-payment of debts was common. Advertisements by local merchants and tradespeople well into the first quarter of the nineteenth century--including those of furniture-makers--frequently noted that "country produce" would be as welcome as cash. While this allowed local planters to obtain goods without immediate payment, the economic inconsistencies of farming and the resulting debt-ridden economy, led to the demise of many local businesses.

In spite of Petersburg's racial inequities, imbalanced distribution of wealth, and fundamental economic flaws, however, the preponderance of evidence suggests that local residents and businesses alike developed effective alternatives. In the post-Revolutionary period, local population figures steadily increased, as did the town's physical plant. Furthermore, with the

¹⁰⁵ Earle and Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," p. 28.

installation of a centralized, agricultural marketplace, the town greatly expanded its role as a primary commercial center for much of southern Virginia. As Earle and Hoffman argue, tobacco and other staples were "increasingly shipped longer distances to growing coastal ports. This reorientation accelerated rapidly in the post-Revolutionary era as tobacco throughout the tidewater and the Piedmont of Virginia and North Carolina converged on Petersburg, Richmond and Baltimore."¹⁰⁶ Within this stimulated environment, Petersburg artisans came to produce a wider range of manufactures. According to Siener and other staple crop economists, this production of goods for the domestic market represented a key factor in the expansion of Petersburg's economy.¹⁰⁷ Outside investment--another vital indicator of economic stability--also became a factor in Petersburg's development. Siener thus concludes that affluent Fredericksburg residents often chose to back manufacturing enterprises in Petersburg and Richmond, which supports the conclusion that these towns were indeed important commercial centers.¹⁰⁸

As a transition area for local, national, and international commerce, Petersburg benefitted from Norfolk's initial rapid post-War recovery. Profitable trade routes with the West Indies, a primary contributor to Norfolk's former prosperity, were resumed. Furthermore, manufacturers and planters alike set to the task of re-establishing and surpassing their pre-war status. In spite of these efforts, however, post-Revolutionary market towns in Virginia, and Norfolk in particular, fell victim to international diplomacy. As they had before the war, British interests controlled many of the international ports

¹⁰⁶ Earle and Hoffman, p. 27.

¹⁰⁷ Siener, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ Siener, p. 33.

with which Norfolk did business, as well as many of Virginia's mercantile trading houses. In the 1780s British authorities imposed a series of harsh retaliatory trade limitations, which severely limited the range of American commerce that could be sent through the trading houses. Furthermore they decreed that all wares were only to be transported on their own vessels. In short, Britain's substantial control of Atlantic market centers, meant that port towns like Norfolk, whose vital ship building and repair industries came to a virtual halt, were devastated.¹⁰⁹

Petersburg and the other tobacco trade satellites were an essential part of Norfolk's economy, both as suppliers and consumers. As it had before the Revolution, Norfolk remained an important trade intermediary for these cities. Furthermore, Petersburg merchants frequently travelled to the giant port city to purchase their supplies.¹¹⁰ In short, Petersburg's economy was largely dependent on trade with Norfolk. As a result, when Britain's harsh legislation resulted in Norfolk's rapid economic decline, Petersburg's political leaders initiated a petition to Congress declaring that their commerce had been ruined and that immediate relief was needed.¹¹¹ The petition urged that immediate consideration be given to restoring Norfolk's shipbuilding industry and to opening the trade routes to Virginia-built and Virginia-owned ships. This, and similar petitions from other American trade centers, led eventually to the Annapolis Convention and the subsequent Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. With the ratification of the Constitution, America's power to regulate commerce on a national scale was both centralized and strengthened,

¹⁰⁹ Wertenbaker, pp. 75-78.

¹¹⁰ W.S. Forrest, Sketches of Norfolk, (Philadelphia, 1853), pp. 116-117, cited in Wertenbaker, p. 91.

¹¹¹ Wertenbaker, p.78.

giving port cities an effective means of retaliating against British trade restrictions.

Beginning in 1792 additional economic relief for the colonies accompanied a series of military conflicts in Europe involving France, Britain, Holland, Spain, Austria, Prussia and Sardinia. European trade in the West Indies declined dramatically and American coastal centers, including Norfolk, quickly assumed a major role in these markets. Subsequent European developments prevented this beneficial arrangement from lasting, but in the interim, Petersburg's businesses took advantage of the stimulated trade.¹¹² In sum, after the Revolutionary War, Petersburg found ways to survive a variety of internal economic deficiencies and a vacillating local and international trade system. Contributing to this steady growth was the town's increasing economic self-sufficiency--its emergence as an independent regional market center where local artisans and merchants found an ever-growing clientele to serve. As Russo concludes, while "the overseas market for tobacco may have exerted the strongest influence upon the Chesapeake economy, there remained a substantial local sector as well. Planters exchanged grain, flour, dairy products, livestock, and lumber with local merchants, who in turn sold these goods to other county residents."¹¹³ In fact, Petersburg's substantial inland commercial networks created an *economic buffer* not found in the more singularly-focused shipping and large-scale trade economy of Norfolk. This pattern became increasingly important after 1800.

In addition to its vacillating economic situation, Petersburg was forced to confront ongoing problems with flood, fire, and disease. In August 1795

¹¹² Hurst, p. 31.

¹¹³ Russo, p. 431.

torrential rains flooded most of the lower part of town, including the main commercial center along the river, which later was, appropriately, referred to as Water Street. Two-thirds of the buildings were either moved off their foundations or destroyed altogether.¹¹⁴ A major culprit in this disaster was the town's abundance of decrepit, wood frame buildings which stood on inadequate foundations. From its earliest years as a tobacco trading center, Petersburg's planters and agricultural merchants had erected these wooden structures to process and distribute crops. Throughout the last half of the eighteenth century, other proprietors took over many of the sites. Few could afford to replace the existing buildings with more permanent brick structures. Some of Petersburg's wooden structures--notable as much for their promotion of unhealthy living situations as for their poor condition--were lost in a series of large fires in 1790, 1791, and 1796. In response to this frequent problem, several fund raising campaigns were initiated in 1791 to purchase an "engine" and for the chartering of a "fire company" that by 1795 was called the Old Street Fire Company. For one local cabinetmaker, Alexander Taylor, such efforts proved to be too late; he lost his house to fire in 1792.

Disease came in a variety of forms. Petersburg, like most eastern Virginia towns, was often described in travel journals and letters as an unhealthy place. In 1786, Josiah Flagg of New England wrote that it was "the most dirty place I ever saw....Nine monthes of the year the mud is half leg deep, it is a very Sickly place owing in a great measure to its Situation....the Vapours arising from [the Appomattox] contaminate the air, with the most pestilential disorders....Agues, and fevers of Every kind prevail."¹¹⁵ In fact,

¹¹⁴ State Gazette of North Carolina, Edenton, August 27, 1795.

¹¹⁵ Scott and Wyatt, p. 41.

the local fear of bad air from the river led to the planting of a screen of trees along riverfront streets. Schoepf wrote in 1783 that "this town has a very unhealthy situation; its inhabitants seldom reach a great age, and have always to contend with intermittent fevers and their grievous sequelae."¹¹⁶ Clearly some visitors gave exaggerated reports of Petersburg's rather inhospitable climate, yet disease remained a persistent problem for local residents since in many instances it travelled from town to town. For example, in 1795 Norfolk suffered a disastrous smallpox epidemic that was immediately followed by an outbreak of yellow fever.¹¹⁷ Several infected people from Norfolk made their way to Petersburg and it was feared that the diseases would arrive on a much larger scale. To counteract the problem, a town meeting was convened in early 1796 and a committee--including two artisans involved in the furniture trade--was assigned to devise methods of controlling the smallpox. Epidemics like this led to the development of inoculation and quarantine systems that were enforced by local "guards" until a hospital in Prince George County was established later that year.¹¹⁸

In short, outstanding evidence suggests that after the war, Petersburg experienced continued commercial development, but did so in the face of numerous economic and physical setbacks. The increased settlement of inland counties further promoted the town's agricultural trade and its role as a center for wholesale, retail, and manufacturing operations. Trade and business in town, though somewhat tempered by the large percentage of black residents who could not fully participate in the local market and an unstable system of

¹¹⁶ Schoepf, p. 72.

¹¹⁷ Hurst, p. 37.

¹¹⁸ Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, June 14, 1796, 3-2; Ibid., July 15, 1796, 2-1,2.

currency, steadily grew to meet the needs of local and regional residents. Physical improvements arrived in the form of upgraded overland routes and the development of new roads that went even further inland. The construction of a canal to bypass the falls five miles above town--a project first proposed in the 1740s--was finally begun in 1795. Upon completion, this facility greatly increased the quantity of commerce moved along the upper part of the Appomattox. In short, while Norfolk and other American port towns experienced considerable economic difficulties after the Revolutionary towns, Petersburg remained less affected by expanding its role as an important regional marketplace.

FURNITURE-MAKING FROM 1780-1800: LOCAL AND REGIONAL EXPANSION

Petersburg's steady, albeit rather unpredictable, economic development after the War led to an increased size and diversity of local trades, among them furniture-making. Ten distinct cabinetmaking shops can be identified in town between 1780 and 1800, as opposed to just three pre-Revolutionary shops-trade growth similarly evident, in spite of economic difficulties, in the larger market center of Norfolk.¹¹⁹ Importantly, however, during this period Petersburg's artisans continued to produce wares that reflected the neat and plain rococo style while makers in other American furniture centers were exploring neoclassicism, a European fashion that gained widespread popularity in America after the War and was characterized by the use of flat-surfaced, geometric forms ornamented with decorative veneer and inlay.

As noted earlier, the influx of Norfolk's cabinetmaking traditions continued with the documented arrival of John McCloud, who had apprenticed with John Selden in Norfolk beginning in 1773.¹²⁰ By 1787 McCloud was established in Blandford, and later took on his own apprentices to the shop that operated until his death in 1795.¹²¹ His estate appraisal, personal property assessments, and land taxes reveal that he achieved a relatively high degree of success for a local artisan (see Appendix B). Irish born James McCormick also relocated during this period. Upon arriving in America he worked briefly in Baltimore and Alexandria before moving to Norfolk in 1787, where he offered cabinetwares, chairs and coffins. He then moved to Petersburg. By the time of his death in 1791, his estate included a wide variety

¹¹⁹ Hurst, p. 39.

¹²⁰ Norfolk County Order Book, 1773, March 19, 1773, p. 163a.

¹²¹ Despite its 1784 incorporation as part of Petersburg, Blandford continued to be distinguished by that name well into the nineteenth century.

of cabinetmaking materials, including "twelve very handsome mahogany CHAIRS, nearly finished; a chest of Cabinet-maker's tools, a work bench and a mahogany desk."¹²² In its continuing provision of artisans, as well in its expanded trade contacts with Petersburg, then, Norfolk appears to have retained a significant degree of influence on the development of Petersburg's cabinet trade during and immediately after the War.

In addition to its importation of cabinetmakers from other parts of Virginia, Petersburg also attracted European-trained artisans. Richard Powell and Joseph Faux began working in town around 1783. Although little is known of their seven year tenure, an announcement of their arrival in Fayetteville, North Carolina in February 1790 indicates that their Petersburg offerings may have been extensive. Powell and Faux advertised themselves as "Carpenters, Joiners, Cabinetmakers, Turners, Carvers, Gilders, and undertakers.... having been regularly reared in the above branches in Europe, and their many years experience in America, flatter themselves that they can give satisfaction to all who would wish to employ them."¹²³ They also offered Fayetteville residents Petersburg references who could attest to the quality of their work. Furthermore, the general size of their Petersburg operation can be gauged by the fact that they brought with them five apprentices and a journeyman; similar figures appear in their Petersburg tax listings. In general, this trend suggests that the size of local cabinetmaking operations--shops that in the pre-Revolutionary years appear to have been approximately half as large--grew to meet the needs of Petersburg's expanding community, a conclusion

¹²² Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, June 23, 1791, 3-2.

¹²³ Bivins, p. 493.

supported by the documented establishment of similarly sized shops during this period.

After 1780 Petersburg furniture-makers played a greater role in the town's emergence as a regional commercial center. By 1807, for example, Sterling Woodward--a coachmaker who rented space to an unidentified Windsor chairmaker--acknowledged the importance of Petersburg's large regional clientele by thanking "the Citizens of the States of Virginia & North Carolina" for their patronage.¹²⁴ For a nine year period beginning in 1790, Petersburg cabinetmaker Samuel White provided a large variety furniture forms for Sir Peyton and Lady Jean Skipwith of "Prestwould" in Mecklenburg County, located southwest of the city along the North Carolina border. As with many other affluent rural planters in Virginia's Southside, the Skipwiths purchased a wide variety of wares from Petersburg, Norfolk, and North Carolina sources. Notably, they relied on White for much of their furniture, including a broad range of case and seating forms, bedsteads, tables, washstands, and upholstered seating furniture, including a "French Sophy covered with sheeting," and, importantly, "packing boxes" in which to move furniture. Furniture still at Prestwould, as well as a bed at Colonial Williamsburg, are attributable to White and reflect his retention of the same "neat and plain" British cabinetmaking traditions common to pre-Revolutionary Petersburg forms.

White's simultaneous production of not only the furniture, but also packing crates illuminates an important and rarely recorded aspect of Virginia's early furniture trades, namely their methods of transporting finished wares to the patron--an even larger concern for Petersburg's

¹²⁴ The Republican, Petersburg, April 2, 1807, 1-1.

artisans whose products served such a large regional market. The Skipwiths' furniture almost certainly would have travelled to Prestwould along the major postal and trade road running from Petersburg directly to Mecklenberg Court House and on into North Carolina. Although little documentation survives concerning the overland transport of wares, an excerpt from a 1753 letter from Thomas Jones of Hanover County to Williamsburg cabinetmaker James Spiers reveals that the chairs he recently ordered from the artisan were to be "well Secured and pack^t in the Waggon that they take no damage."¹²⁵ A similar English reference appears in the diary of William Holland, a Somerset clergyman, who records that a newly purchased set of six parlour chairs, "packed very neatly in matts," were, to the great concern of the buyer, simply "lashed behind" the battered chaise he was travelling in for the rough overland journey. The writer was pleased and surprised when the chairs were found safe upon arrival.¹²⁶ Even as late as 1810 when local systems of transportation had been greatly improved, the cabinetmaking firm of "Caldwell & Wills" in Petersburg felt the need to advertise that their furniture would be "packed up in the best manner."¹²⁷ Such were the rigors of overland transportation to which Petersburg manufactures were subjected to during inland travel.

Further evidence concerning the growth of Petersburg's furniture making community after 1780 exists in the physical arrangement of shops. By that period specific commercial areas within town became discernible,

¹²⁵ Jones Family Papers, Orig: Library of Congress, December, 1753. Thanks to Cathy Hellier of Colonial Williamsburg for this reference.

¹²⁶ Paupers and Pig Killers - The Diary of William Holland, a Somerset Parson, 1799-1818, ed. Jack Ayres, (Penguin Country Library), p. 32. I wish to thank Betty Leviner of Colonial Williamsburg for this reference.

¹²⁷ Petersburg Republican, April 9, 1810.

including a cabinetmaking district along Old Street, also referred to as Water Street and now called Grove Avenue. This location had several distinct advantages, notably its direct access to both Old Street, a main commercial thoroughfare, and to the riverfront, which paralleled this road. In fact, a number of local furniture artisans may have even been able to provide their own shipping transportation. The 1793 estate inventory of local chairmaker Jonathan Russell (see Appendix D) indicates that he owned a "schooner" and a "lighter, or skew;" similar patterns appear in Norfolk, where, for example, cabinetmaker Edmond Allmond operated a ferry that ran from his shop at Ferry Point to both Norfolk proper and Portsmouth.¹²⁸ Together, the activities of White, Woodward, Russell and others further document the pervasive regional influence of Petersburg's furniture artisans.

The relative preponderance of surviving evidence suggests that Petersburg's furniture trades continued to expand and diversify in the face of considerable local and international trade fluctuations. Offsetting these problems was the regional influx of affluent planters who came to rely on Petersburg as a commercial center. They comprised a profitable new clientele for local artisans. Reflecting this higher demand, furniture-makers not only hired more shop workers, they also took advantage of technological advances that increased production capabilities. Perfectly suited for large-scale production was Windsor seating furniture. Petersburg soon became an important regional producer of these forms. By the early nineteenth century it served as one of Virginia's premier Windsor chairmaking centers.

Windsor seating furniture's popularity blossomed in Europe during the first half of the eighteenth century. A wide range of Windsor styles were

¹²⁸ Hurst, p. 65.

created, from simple vernacular "stick" chairs to elaborately carved hardwood examples. Many were used in the homes of affluent British citizens, primarily in libraries, halls, as well as outside on porches and in gardens. Large quantities of Windsors were also exported to the colonies. Before long, Virginia Windsor chairmaking traditions emerged. By 1745 Richard Caulton, a London-trained upholsterer living in Williamsburg, was, according to the Virginia Gazette, making and repairing "Windsor chairs" to Tidewater; this is the earliest known reference to an American maker.¹²⁹ Soon residents of Petersburg and its surrounding counties began using Windsor chairs. For example, while courting Ann Miller of Fleur-de-Hundred in Prince George County, Robert Bolling found her one day "seated in a large Windsor Chair in the Piazza."¹³⁰ Mark Wenger's research on Virginia architecture reveals an intriguing correlation between the development of houses with central-passages and the use of Windsor chairs in those spaces.¹³¹ By the end of the decade, Windsor chairmaking in the colonies had expanded dramatically, even in rural areas. In 1770, for instance, Robert Carter of Westmoreland County paid John Atwell for making one dozen Windsors.¹³² Nevertheless, though Windsor chairmaking thrived in the South, production remained highest in America's northern cities, such as New York and Philadelphia whose artisans produced vast quantities for export. Indeed, these northern chairs had a profound impact on the nature of southern Windsor designs.

¹²⁹ Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, November, 28, 1745. Thanks to Ronald L. Hurst for this reference.

¹³⁰ LeMay, p. 67.

¹³¹ Wenger, Mark J., Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II

¹³² Robert Carter Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, M-82-8, cited in Gusler, p. 3.

Before considering the rise of Petersburg's Windsor trade, however, it is essential first to understand the intimate nature of its connection to local coach and riding chair making. By the 1790s at least sixteen artisans practiced the coach or chairmaking trades, a remarkably high figure for a city of Petersburg's size and a pattern that suggests the town's role as an important regional coachmaking center. Among the services these artisans offered were a wide range of decorative skills, including sign or herald painting and coach "japaning," as well as gilding and striping. These techniques also were used by local Windsormakers, whose chairs were almost always painted, and often, ornamented with gold striping. Because of the similar skills involved, coachmakers often decorated Windsor and "fancy" chairs, the latter being traditional furniture forms that were boldly painted instead of varnished. By the first part of the nineteenth century, over *forty percent* of Petersburg's coachmakers were also involved in the production or repair of Windsor chairs. The high number of coachmakers offering finished Windsors suggests that the unfinished productions of local Windsormakers were purchased and decorated at the coach shops--an informal, or at least unadvertised, trade partnership which allowed both participants to contribute their own specialized skills. In fact, the alliance extends beyond the two trade's shared use of painted decoration; at this time riding chair designs were essentially Windsor chairs attached to a wheeled platform. Thus Alexander Brown, a Petersburg Windsor chairmaker, provided local coach makers with wooden "gig" or riding chair seats.¹³³ In short, Windsor seating furniture and riding chairs or coaches were closely related both aesthetically and

¹³³ Mount Vernon has a Virginia riding chair showing this Windsor-type of seat, and the form is illustrated in a painting entitled "View of the town of Warrenton," illustrated in Bivins, p. 66.

structurally, and their shared production reflected the popularity of the design.

Windsor chairs were imported into Petersburg, often in large numbers, for some time prior to the establishment of local manufactories. Most arrived from large northern manufacturing centers. For example, in 1791 Philadelphia merchant Stephen Girard shipped six dozen Windsor chairs directly to Petersburg.¹³⁴ As early as 1793, however, locally made Windsor seating furniture was also available in Petersburg. The first recorded specialist was Robert McKeen, who carried on "the business of WINDSOR CHAIR making, in all its various branches, at Dinwiddie Court-house," south of Petersburg.¹³⁵ City residents who were interested in purchasing his chairs could be supplied with them at the Old Street shop of Francis Brown, who, not surprisingly, was a coachmaker. By 1795 McKeen had apparently moved his operation to Petersburg; property insurance records after that time indicate that his two story "wooden chair makers shop" stood on High Street.¹³⁶ He had moved to Warrenton, North Carolina, by 1800, where he became a tavernkeeper, the first of many Petersburg furniture-makers to follow the trade routes into North Carolina and one of several to become involved in

¹³⁴ get citation from STP

¹³⁵ Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, September 6, 1793, 1-1.

¹³⁶ Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 10, May 11, 1796, p. 16.

McKeen's Windsor making operation in Petersburg was established at the same time as the Richmond shop of Robert and Andrew McKim. Indeed, nearby Richmond also served as an important Windsormaking center, which suggests that both cities co-dominated the region's Windsor production. Numerous later movements by many chairmakers back and forth between Petersburg and Richmond, as well as the simultaneous operation of shops in both towns, further supports this theory. See Giles Cromwell, "Andrew and Robert McKim: Windsor Chair Makers," JMESDA, Vol. VI, No. 1, May 1980, pp. 1-20. Despite their similar spelling, it is clear that McKeen and McKim were separate and apparently unrelated family names.

either the "house of entertainment" or ordinary business.¹³⁷ His importance for the history of Petersburg, however, centers on his role as the city's first Windsor chairmaker. As the impressive number and size of later shops clearly indicates, the trade became an integral part of the local economy--a pattern less evident, for example, in the much larger city of Norfolk.

Increased trade specialization, another significant indicator of urbanization and economic development, came to Petersburg's furniture community after the Revolutionary War. By 1797, for example, the shop of "Swann & Ellis," one of Petersburg's larger cabinetmaking operations, employed a "professed upholsterer." While earlier cabinetmakers are known to have produced upholstered forms in their shops, this represents the first local reference to an artisan specializing as an upholsterer. The principal owner of the operation, Samuel Swann, was already a successful Richmond businessman and furniture-maker in 1795 when he entered into the a local cabinetmaking partnership with a "Mr. Ellis"--possibly the local coachmaker John W. Ellis.¹³⁸ "Swann & Ellis" ran a shop of considerable size and soon advertised for three or four additional journeymen. They offered local residents a full range of cabinetwares, including a variety of upholstered forms that were "made as elegant and on as cheap terms as can be imported from any foreign market."¹³⁹ By 1797 the firm was assessed for five adult white males and three adult black males, another indication that Petersburg was now able to support cabinet shops considerably larger than those of

¹³⁷ See Biographic Sketches for Samuel Caldwell, Thomas Fenner, and Robert McKeen, pp.

¹³⁸ Swann continued to operate his Richmond shop at this time, indicating his role as a manager rather than an active cabinetmaker.

¹³⁹ Virginia Gazette, Petersburg, November 3, 1795, 2-3; Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, October 21, 1796, 2-3.

twenty years earlier.¹⁴⁰ In both size and specialization, "Swann & Ellis" reflects the expansion of Petersburg's furniture trades.

Swann's apparent ownership of shops in both Richmond and Petersburg appears to be the first local instance of what might be labeled branch furniture-making, in other words the simultaneous operation of several shops, often in different towns.¹⁴¹ Indeed, Swann's practice is in line with Petersburg's growing role as a center for extensive chain stores, massive wholesale and retail businesses that dispersed both local manufactures and imports across much of southern Virginia and northern North Carolina, trade activity introduced to the area decades earlier with the establishment of numerous Scottish trading houses. Typical of this trend toward expansion was the mercantile firm of "Dinwiddie, Crawford and Company," which well into the 1790s maintained retail stores in Blandford, Dinwiddie County, Brunswick County, Mecklenburg County and Warren County, North Carolina.¹⁴²

Businesses like that established by Joseph Badger, an artisan who combined his technical skills as painter, coachmaker, paperhanger, and umbrella maker with his operation of a "Retail Colour Shop," indicate that a wide range of wares were available to local tradespeople after 1780. Badger's shop advertised its services, including the sale of "all kinds of paints used in common, either in their natural state, or prepared for the brush." Badger also provided local artisans with "linseed, and train oil, putty, window glass and

¹⁴⁰ Petersburg Intelligencer, October 13, 1797; Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1797, (Virginia State Library Archives).

¹⁴¹ Other Virginia artisans, such as Norfolk cabinetmaker Chester Sully in the first decades of the nineteenth century, ran similar branch furniture making ventures. See Hurst, pp. 138-145.

¹⁴² Scott and Wyatt, p. 72. Pre-Revolutionary mercantile operation served not only area residents, but also local artisans. After 1780, increasingly specialized shops were established in town.

paint brushes" and by 1799 carried "large glass suitable for pictures, clocks, bookcases, show boxes, &c. which he will cut to any size that may be wanting."¹⁴³ Badger's operation would have been a vital local source for glazing supplies, paints, and clear finishes for a broad range of local furniture-makers. His and other specialized shops served to centralize the resources needed by tradespeople, some of whom may have moved to Petersburg to take advantage of the expanded offerings.

The increased size and assortment of local furniture-making operations after 1780 parallels Petersburg's general development as an important Virginia commercial center. The simultaneous establishment of considerable Windsor chairmaking and coachmaking operations indicates the regional importance of local wares. Post-Revolutionary cabinetmaking shops, like those of Samuel White, Powell & Faux, and Swann & Ellis provided a wide variety of cabinetwares for local use and for transport to inland counties via improved land and water transportation routes.

After 1780 Petersburg's changing agricultural trade and its growing role as a regional market center provided it with an economic buffer against numerous national and international events. Such patterns may also have caused the town to be somewhat culturally protected as well. Furniture continued to be imported into town after the Revolution, but on a much smaller scale. Indeed, the vast majority of surviving objects and related documentation indicate that a large percentage of the furniture used in the area at this time was locally made. Petersburg's furniture-making activity after the Revolutionary War was considerable and residents had neither the

¹⁴³ Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, September 29, 1791, 4-4; Ibid., May 7, 1799, 3-4.

need, nor apparently the desire, to look elsewhere for such services. Yet important changes were at hand. Specifically, the cabinetmaking traditions of Petersburg and those of Norfolk and other coastal centers began to diverge. While local artisans continued to produce decoratively restrained, British influenced, neat and plain furniture, artisans in most other large American towns were beginning to explore the neoclassic taste, newly arrived from Europe.

This divergence is clearly documented in the technical and aesthetic choices made by post-Revolutionary Petersburg artisans and their patrons. Certain practices common to the furniture productions of America's larger coastal centers, such as an abundant use of decorative inlay and stringing, did not become a prominent part of the local cabinetmaking vocabulary--a pattern that speaks not to the stylistic ignorance of Petersburg artisans but rather to the insular nature of the local economy and the continuation of well-established furniture-making practices. Post-war economic restrictions and the decline of trade activity with Britain corresponded with the expansion of commercial centers, including Baltimore and Norfolk, along the Atlantic seaboard. Before long, trade activity between these coastal cities reached unprecedented levels; physical manifestations of this relationship are evident in closely related neoclassic furniture designs with a common emphasis on decorative inlay and veneer work. At the same time, British and American embargoes effectively *reduced* Petersburg's coastal trade, especially with nearby Norfolk. As a result, Petersburg furniture after 1780 began to look less and less like that of America's coastal centers. Local wares such as a chest of drawers generally display a restrained sense of ornamentation and represent a logical continuation of the "neat and plain" style common to earlier

wares.¹⁴⁴ Simply put, Petersburg had less direct contact with the coast and was therefore increasingly self-sufficient in its manufacture of goods, a development which explains the rather conservative retention of earlier craft traditions.

Importantly, Petersburg furniture-makers were not alone in their choices. Similarly restrained wares were made in provincial British towns--less an indication of a direct link between the two traditions than the existence of comparable socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, the few furniture forms attributable to Virginia's other upriver commercial centers, towns like Richmond and Fredericksburg whose trade patterns mirrored those of Petersburg, seem to reflect similar design choices.¹⁴⁵ Further regional studies of these areas would be valuable in determining the inter-relationship of such patterns. The evidence concerning the trade in Petersburg is strong and clearly indicates that within a larger American and international context, the town's post-Revolutionary furniture activity represents a distinctive cultural expression.

However, beginning in the 1790s other developments emerged which served to erode the insular and conservative foundations of Petersburg's furniture-making community. Local artisans, like those in most southern coastal towns, began to experience adverse affects from the ever-growing importation of competitively priced furniture from northern manufacturing

¹⁴⁴ A clothespress by the same maker is now on display at Centre Hill Mansion, a house museum in Petersburg.

¹⁴⁵ Aline H. Zeno's "The Furniture Craftsmen of Richmond, Virginia, 1780-1820" (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Delaware, 1987) is primarily an economic history of the trade and examines how artisans fit into a larger, Richmond business community. Specific material culture themes, such as what the furniture looked like and why it looked that way it did, are not explored to any great extent,

centers. Substantial shops New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, and Baltimore were increasingly able to produce substantial quantities of fashionable furniture for export and they found a receptive market in many southern towns, including Norfolk and Petersburg, where residents actively sought these imports while at the same time supporting a large local cabinetmaking community.¹⁴⁶ In the face of this new competition, Norfolk cabinetmakers such as James Woodward felt compelled to advertise their ability to produce wares "equal to any importation."¹⁴⁷ Petersburg makers also felt the need to keep pace with the stylish imports and they steadily moved away from their regionally distinct neat and plain fashion toward a northern influenced style.

¹⁴⁶ Hurst, p. 48.

¹⁴⁷ Hurst, p. 48.

PETERSBURG IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the turn of the century, substantial transportation improvements proved a vital means of expanding Petersburg's role as a regional market center. Beginning in 1795 attempts were made to deepen the ten miles of meandering waterway below the falls and in 1802 the Lower Appomattox Company was established. This organization was empowered to reduce sandbars, create new and deeper channels, and to erect jetties that would increase the speed of the current while reducing silt levels. The Upper Appomattox Company was chartered in 1795 to create a safe, weatherproof alternative around the falls and within fifteen years a five and a half mile long canal system, which included a system of locks and terminated at a basin in the center of town, was completed. The company also oversaw the clearing of navigation all the way to Planterstown, twenty-three miles above Farmville in Prince Edward County, extending the market for Petersburg businesses and artisans.¹⁴⁸ Activity steadily increased through 1820, by which time more than 3000 batteaux ventures per year were recorded on the upper portion of the Appomattox.¹⁴⁹

Road improvements remained an annual concern and by 1813 Bollingbrook Street, an increasingly important commercial thoroughfare, was paved. New toll roads and bridges, such as the span running across the Appomattox to Chesterfield, brought added revenue to Petersburg. Local economic expansion also benefited from subterranean developments, including the installation of a system of underground pipes in 1800 that

¹⁴⁸ Richard L. Jones, Dinwiddie County, Carrefour of the Commonwealth, (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1976), pp. 11-115.

¹⁴⁹ William E. Trout, III, The Appomattox River Atlas, (Virginia Canals and Navigations Society, 1990), p. 2.

brought fresh water directly to the business district.¹⁵⁰ In spite of these substantial physical improvements, however, Petersburg's economic expansion was not without significant difficulties. Notably, new international trade disruptions continued to affect the national and international market for Petersburg's profitable agricultural trade.

A complex progression of military and diplomatic conflicts in Europe led to the interruption of America's coastal trading networks, including those focused on Norfolk. After 1800 American ships travelling to British markets in the West Indies increasingly became targets of attack by French and Spanish privateers, who sought to encourage direct American commercial activity with their own colonial outposts. By 1806 an estimated one out of every four American ships sailing in the region was captured.¹⁵¹ At the same time, British vessels stepped up their interference with American coastal trade by stopping vessels to demand the return of sailors who had jumped ship to escape harsh conditions, a substantial burden on an American shipping system that was already short of sailors. In response to Europe's trade interference, Thomas Jefferson and his legislative supporters imposed the Embargo Act of 1808, a protectionist policy that restricted all international trade through American ports. Proponents argued that by completely severing ties to European market centers, the damaging loss of American commerce would inspire a speedy resolution of the persistent trade interference. This theory, however, failed miserably; Europe simply turned to other markets and American coastal cities were devastated. Southern ports, where shipworkers lost their jobs and warehouses became dormant, were particularly hard hit.

¹⁵⁰ Scott and Wyatt, p. 53.

¹⁵¹ Wertenbaker, p. 96; Hurst, p. 32.

Norfolk fell into a severe economic depression, and even the partial repeal of the Embargo Act restrictions in 1809 did not prevent long-term damage to its West Indian markets.¹⁵² Petersburg's Appomattox River trade with Norfolk declined considerably, and many local wholesale and retail merchants were forced into other business ventures. By 1811, for example, one of the larger mercantile operations, the firm of Halliday & Maben "declined their dry goods business until relations with England had improved."¹⁵³

Anglo-American relations continued to deteriorate and by June, 1812, the two countries were again at war. By 1813 the extensive British naval blockade brought coastal and international trade activity in the Port of Norfolk, already weakened by the effects of the Embargo Act, to a virtual standstill. Fearful that the British would capture ships bearing local products, the American legislature imposed even harsher trade restrictions, acts that went so far as to prohibit trade between coastal ports and their upriver satellites. Despite the widespread unpopularity of this legislation--vividly illustrated in Petersburg newspapers by numerous editorial protests and merchant complaints--the restrictions continued. To counteract these measures, some local merchants devised alternate methods of transporting goods. For example, tobacco, wheat, flour, corn, meal, and other cash crops continued to be shipped, albeit illegally, from both Richmond and Petersburg to Norfolk. Cargoes were then moved overland and along inland waterways to ports in North Carolina, from which point they could be safely sent to Charleston, Europe, and the West Indies.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Petersburg's economy suffered. Despite such setbacks, however, the town's ever-expanding

¹⁵² Hurst, 32-35.

¹⁵³ The Republican, November 14, 1811.

¹⁵⁴ Hurst, pp. 34-35.

role as an independent regional market center allowed many businesses to survive and even prosper during this difficult period.

With each passing year, Petersburg abandoned its former role as a mono-dimensional tobacco processing center reliant on Norfolk for most of its material needs. In its place emerged a diversified urban center that served an ever-growing regional clientele. The declining regional output of tobacco after the Revolutionary War serves as evidence of this evolution. By 1796 production declined by two-fifths in the Piedmont region, which included many of Petersburg's surrounding counties, and nearly disappeared north of the James River.¹⁵⁵ America's repeated conflicts with Europe after the 1760s, which encouraged many eastern Virginia planters to try crops that depended less on international consumption, affected the level of change. Movement away from tobacco production was further influenced by eastern Virginia's gradual soil erosion, the result of too many successive tobacco harvests, and by America's geographic growth, which led to the creation of large-scale tobacco farms in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky capable of producing more lower priced tobacco per acre.¹⁵⁶ Most profitable among the alternative crops for Virginia planters was wheat, which like tobacco, went through regional urban centers for processing and, in fact, proved to be a far better "leader of urbanization."¹⁵⁷ Unlike tobacco, wheat production promoted a broad range of specialized processing industries, such as river-powered flour mills and bakeries.

¹⁵⁵ Kulikoff, pp. 157-160.

¹⁵⁶ Lebsack, pp. 10-11. After 1820 Petersburg would again become heavily involved with tobacco production with the creation of industries that produced specialized tobacco products for the national market and by 1860 there were twenty tobacco factories in town that on average employed one hundred slaves and free blacks each.

¹⁵⁷ Siener, p. 17.

In short, while it is clear that Petersburg never completely gave up its tobacco trade, the reduction of economic ties to Great Britain and the resulting decreased dependence on British manufactures promoted the development of other commercial activities. A broad range of indicators suggest that both economically and physically the town and its surrounding counties continued to grow, providing local tradespeople with a relatively stable clientele. In the 1790s Petersburg had a population of around 3,000 people; by the early 1820s there were over 8,000 residents.¹⁵⁸ Considerable demographic changes occurred in the surrounding counties as well. With an increasing need for arable land, planters turned to Virginia's Southside. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, land values for the inland counties around Petersburg rose dramatically and many of the remaining squatters and tenant farmers in the region were pushed even further into undeveloped parts of Virginia's backcountry. As Scott and Wyatt conclude, by the 1780s and 1790s "the high prices of land in Amelia and Prince Edward kept many poor migrants away but attracted slaveholders and freeholders who wanted to live in a developed society."¹⁵⁹

Petersburg's business community, which included trade shops, larger manufactories, and wholesale and retail operations reaped considerable benefits from these changes. Though on a national level protectionist legislation in 1818 and 1820 led to additional trade restrictions against Great Britain and further weakened Norfolk's economy, Petersburg continued to expand its role as the primary commercial center for much of southern Virginia and northern North Carolina. Similar patterns emerge in Virginia's

¹⁵⁸ Scott and Wyatt, pp. 43 and 61.

¹⁵⁹ Scott and Wyatt, p. 159.

other upriver port towns. Fredericksburg, like Petersburg, served as a peripheral rather than a primary American trade center and its regional trade network provided a similar economic buffer against the international events that had stifled the economies of American coastal towns like Norfolk. On the other hand, Fredericksburg's more rigid adherence to tobacco production prevented the type of growth Petersburg and Richmond experienced.¹⁶⁰

It remains evident, then, that Petersburg's emergence as an independent commercial center evolved through a gradual and rather complicated process which was related to a wide range of local, national, and international events and trends. Importantly, however, a single catastrophic event in 1815--a fire that consumed nearly two-thirds of the town's commercial district--greatly accelerated these changes. Even with the adoption of stricter building regulations and the establishment of local firefighting organizations in the 1790s, Petersburg experienced continual problems with fire since the central part of town primarily consisted of decrepit wooden shops, homes, and warehouses. As late as 1814 a visitor noted, "that part of town where business is transacted is irregular, low, and dirty."¹⁶¹ On the night of July 15, 1815 a fire broke out at the Bollingbrook Street house of John Walker. The blaze headed west, consuming both sides of the road before moving north and destroying part of Sycamore Street; it then moved west again, down Old Street and terminated partway along this vital commercial thoroughfare. More than five hundred houses, or approximately

¹⁶⁰ Siener, pp. 400-403.

¹⁶¹ John Cook Wyllie, Ed. "Observations Made During A Short Residence In Virginia" The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 76, No. 4 (1968), pp. 392-393. Thanks to Betty Leviner for this reference.

two-thirds of the downtown area, were burned--a startling fact considering that just twenty-five years earlier, the entire town consisted of only three-hundred buildings. Damage from the blaze was estimated at three million dollars. A local report of the "conflagration" summarized its devastating effects:

The gay, the flourishing town of Petersburg has been visited by a calamity, which, for the suffering, the distress, the wretchedness it has caused, may truly be termed, if language have the power adequately to paint its horrors, unparalleled, overwhelming, dreadful....[T]o think what a change a few hours have produced.¹⁶²

The human and, to a greater extent, material, loss from the fire was massive. Ironically, however, the disaster eventually served the town well.

After the fire, Petersburg was forever changed. One commentator proclaimed that the events of "one short July night obliterated more eye sores, and abated more nuisances than the proprietors of real estate would have done in half a generation."¹⁶³ The many unsightly, poorly managed "wooden frames of aged huts" were replaced by "buildings that would stand an examination with the best constructed mercantile houses in Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New-York."¹⁶⁴ Substantial brick buildings in the commercial district attracted new businesses to Petersburg, while many established commercial occupants quickly surpassed their previous levels of activity and profit. Indeed, such aggressive rebuilding attests to the region's relative economic stability during this period. Furthermore, Petersburg, like

¹⁶² From the offices of the Petersburg Intelligencer, as reported in the Cincinnati Liberty Hall, August 7, 1815 (pub. by J.H. Looker and A. Wallace).

¹⁶³ qtd. in Lebsock, p. 8.

¹⁶⁴ American Beacon and Commercial Diary, Norfolk, August 6, 1816, 2-1; Lebsock, p. 8.

nearby Fredericksburg and most other American urban centers, increasingly was incorporated into the framework of an emerging national economy--a system that promoted the regional development of large-scale, specialized industries and reduced the viability of small shop producers.¹⁶⁵ Early nineteenth century Petersburg newspapers abound with shipping notices that prompted local businesses to conduct trade directly with cities such as New Orleans, Boston, New York and Philadelphia, rather than England.

As Petersburg found its place within this developing national economic network, traditionally ordered trade operations--including many furniture-making shops--were largely excluded. Instead, wholesale and retail operations, and larger industries occupied the town's new brick structures and, because of the ever-improving transportation networks, came to serve a "regional" clientele that included residents of surrounding states. Reflecting the importance of merchants and businesspeople in Petersburg is their continued election to influential political positions. In fact, before long the Common Hall consisted primarily of those who operated wholesale and retail shops, a situation which allowed merchants to steer public policy to meet their specific business needs by promoting improvements and financial incentives aimed at increasing the town's commercial distribution networks. A similar pattern of increased merchant authority occurred in Richmond, where local artisans responded by forming a variety of formal and informal organizations that augmented their ability to compete with that town's powerful merchants.¹⁶⁶ The formation of Petersburg's Benevolent Mechanics Society in 1826 may well reflect similar needs.

¹⁶⁵ Siener, p. 400.

¹⁶⁶ Zeno, p. 5.

After 1800, then, Petersburg continued its evolution as a major regional commercial center, aided in great part by a movement away from international trade linkages. Hastening this pattern were significant physical changes to the town after the fire of 1815. Essential to these developments were improvements to local and national transportation systems. Petersburg increasingly served as an integral part of America's emerging national economic system through its far-reaching mercantile operations, diversified agricultural commerce, and specialized manufactures. Revealingly, by 1850 Petersburg, not Richmond or Norfolk, was at the hub of a massive railroad network which served much of Virginia and North Carolina. In short, while early nineteenth-century Petersburg--like most other Virginia urban centers--experienced considerable economic "booms and busts," it continued to experience positive growth.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, by 1860 Petersburg was ranked among the top fifty cities in America according to the value of their manufactures.¹⁶⁸

However, within a *larger* historiographical context this study's optimistic portrayal of Petersburg's evolution from tobacco center to large-scale regional marketplace might appear misleading. From its earliest years to the time of the Civil War, Petersburg experienced considerable socio-economic development. Yet this development remains somewhat limited by comparison to the North. Historians such as Thomas E. Buckley, Jack P. Greene, and Virginius Dabney compellingly argue that the antebellum South instead experienced a substantial and debilitating cultural decline during this

¹⁶⁷ Lebsack, pp. 9-10.

¹⁶⁸ Lebsack, p. 10.

period.¹⁶⁹ For example, although Virginia was a leading participant in the early shaping of American political and economic policy, by the time of the Civil War it assumed, at best, a peripheral role.¹⁷⁰ Factors contributing to what might be termed its de-volution include the emigration of many qualified leaders, persistent agricultural problems such as soil exhaustion and vacillating markets, the inefficiency of its slave system compared to the free labor system used in the North, and a decline in educational facilities.¹⁷¹ In sum, a variety of important national economic indicators suggest that antebellum southern communities, like Petersburg, were part of a degenerative process.

Cultural and economic developments within the local furniture-making community, changes that particularly accelerated after 1815, begin to reflect the specific weaknesses Buckley and others perceive. After the great fire, Petersburg and the surrounding counties continued to grow, but the size of the local cabinetmaking community stabilized, a clear indication of the town's changing economic character. As noted, Petersburg developed commercially at the expense of numerous smaller trades. Many furniture-making operations, for example, were not able to cope with the higher cost of shop rentals in the renovated commercial districts. Furthermore, the increased political power of merchants and capitalists and the growing importation of

¹⁶⁹ Thomas E. Buckley, "The Declension of Virginia, 1776-1860: A Historiographical Perspective," a paper delivered at "New Directions in American History," (Virginia Historical Society Conference, October 11-13, 1990), p.1. Related "declensionist theory" cited by Buckley includes Jack P. Greene, Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 206, and Virginius Dabney, Virginia: The New Dominion, (Garden City, New York:...,1971), p. 206.

¹⁷⁰ Buckley, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ Buckley, p. 2.

fashionable northern wares created new obstacles to growth. Accordingly, numerous tradespeople migrated to other regions--specifically, to towns that remained outside of the evolving national economic networks. Between 1790 and 1820, for example, at least *eleven* local furniture-makers followed the trade routes into North Carolina, to Raleigh, Halifax, and Warrenton.

Hastening these developments were continued improvements to American transportation systems and Petersburg's steady incorporation into an emerging national economy--changes that progressed rapidly after the 1815 fire and the subsequent, industrially-oriented, rebuilding of the town. "From about 1805 to 1820," concludes Lebsack, "Petersburg lost much of its frontier character, and in its place gained more complexity (and) greater gentility."¹⁷² Local retail operations expanded considerably, and by the 1830s the city had sixteen large wholesale houses which channelled local and, on an increasing scale, imported wares to the interior counties of Virginia and North Carolina. Substantial agricultural processing industries, including early manifestations of Petersburg's extensive antebellum cotton industry emerged and by the 1820s operated on a national level. For the most part, however, such improvements did not come to the local furniture community.

¹⁷² Lebsack, p. 8.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FURNITURE TRADE: 1800 TO 1820

Echoing Petersburg's general economic situation, the cabinet trade experienced a variety of highs and lows in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. For example, the quantity and size of furniture shops increased considerably. For the thirty-five year period prior to 1800, Petersburg supported only eleven full-time cabinetmaking operations; for the twenty year period after 1800, there were more than twenty cabinetmaking shops, nearly a dozen Windsor and fancy chair manufactories, and several upholstery shops. Between 1800 and 1820 Petersburg's furniture trades attained their most productive level. During this same period, however, exports from America's emerging industrial furniture centers--primarily in the North--began to place an increasing burden on Petersburg's furniture artisans. By 1820 these domestic industrial wares effectively ended the town's role as a significant regional furniture producer. Thus during the first few decades of the nineteenth century, although local artisans produced large amounts of wares for the regional market, they never manufactured massive quantities of furniture for export to other American markets.

One of the main reasons why Petersburg's traditionally ordered furniture shops did not produce on an industrial level was that they were poorly suited to keep pace with the technological developments necessitated by changing aesthetic values in furniture design. As noted, after the Revolutionary War American furniture centers slowly but steadily adopted European neoclassic ornamentation--a style characterized by its movement away from expressive, asymmetrical, naturalistic rococo designs toward more contained forms adorned with classically-inspired motifs and two-dimensional, geometric decorative schemes. Americans saw in this new fashion the perfect artistic representation of the rational, ordered philosophies upon which the

new country had been founded. The technological effects of these aesthetic changes were substantial. A large percentage of post-Revolutionary American furniture reveals the use of highly figured veneers and complicated, multi-part inlays--features demanding precise and repetitive production methods that were most economically accomplished through systems of large-scale production.¹⁷³ As a result, increasingly specialized trades were created to produce wares in the new fashion. Petersburg's decided preference for the earlier "neat and plain" style well after the Revolutionary period meant that cabinetmakers never developed the specialized furniture trades that emerged in America's larger cities. In response to this trend, artisans such as gilders, frame makers, veneer makers, and inlay makers found full-time employment in towns like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, which, because of their large populations, obvious transportation advantages, and intimate trade contact, became the major furniture centers. On a smaller, more regional scale, Norfolk and Charleston served as prolific furniture producers. Wares from these larger cities increasingly appear in Petersburg after 1800, and, indeed, by the 1820s come to dominate the local market. All evidence suggests, then, that Petersburg did not emerge as a large-scale American furniture manufacturing center after 1800. While the local furniture-making community continued to experience considerable growth and diversification, it did not achieve the same degree of trade specialization that took place in larger cities. Instead, Petersburg residents

¹⁷³ Forsyth M. Alexander, "Cabinet Warehousing in the Southern Atlantic Ports, 1783-1820," *JMESDA*, (November, 1989, Vol. XV, No. 2), p. 3. For example, by the 1790s Baltimore had become a national manufacturing center of wooden inlays for furniture.

may well have looked to Norfolk's artisans for skills such as frame making or inlay work.¹⁷⁴

However, Petersburg's role as a regional production center was *significant* and, in fact, represents an important facet of furniture-making in early America. In general, the distinctive early nineteenth century furniture productions of smaller American market towns like Petersburg often reflect a continuation of specific regional craft practices, idiosyncrasies that steadily disappeared in larger centers with the mechanization of the furniture industry. Extensive trade growth did occur in Petersburg between 1800 and 1820, albeit on a smaller-scale than in the northern manufacturing areas.

To document the expansion of Petersburg's furniture trades after 1800, it is essential to recognize several significant regional developments. Local artisans reaped the benefits of advances in the processing of raw materials, progress aided by both transportation improvements and technological advancements. Of great value to furniture-makers in particular was Petersburg's emergence as a regional center for the wood trade; the Appomattox and its many estuaries were well-suited to certain technologies such as water-driven saw mills. By 1810 at least 112 saw mills had been established throughout Virginia, including the areas along the Appomattox.¹⁷⁵ One well-established Petersburg operator was Baldwin Pearce, a carpenter, who by 1801 also possessed a "screw machine," yet another significant technological advancement.¹⁷⁶ In addition to the productions of local saw mills, massive quantities of wood were imported into Petersburg from

¹⁷⁴ For a summary of carver/gilders in Norfolk, see Hurst, pp. 50, note 17.

¹⁷⁵ Wyllie, p. 414.

¹⁷⁶ Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, February 2, 1802, p. 75. This probably refers to a machine that die-cut the threads onto screws.

other states and international markets. In 1811, for example, the inventory of merchant Edward Stokes included twenty-thousand feet of imported inch plank. A few years later Petersburg cabinetmaker John DeJernatt received "45,000 feet of the best quality island and bay MAHOGANY," a portion of which was "cut for the use of builders, for stairways, inside doors, sashes &c."¹⁷⁷ The later reference reveals his connections to the house building trade as well. With such offerings to chose from, the local furniture trades certainly did not suffer from a lack of resources.

After 1800, local furniture-makers also began to enjoy the benefits of local nail manufactories. Prior to this time, most of the wrought iron nails used by carpenters and furniture-makers had been imported from England, where production technology was far more sophisticated than in the colonies. By the start of the nineteenth century, however, America developed a faster and less expensive method of manufacture. By 1805 Levin Dorsey of Norfolk had a "complete set of machinery....to produce 500 to 600 lbs. of Nails daily."¹⁷⁸ Shortly thereafter several Petersburg nail manufactories were started, including Sceva Thayer's prolific Petersburg Nail Factory, which opened in 1811. Thayer's cut nails and brads were sold both at his factory, as well as at Stokes's retail store. Petersburg's ability to process raw materials and manufacture related products with such efficiency attests to its importance as a regional economic center.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Republican, Petersburg, November 13, 1811, 1-2. Petersburg Republican, March 6, 1818, 2-5.

¹⁷⁸ Bivins, pp. 88-89; The Republican, May 2, 1815, 4-4.

¹⁷⁹ Other early cut-nail manufactories in Petersburg include William Knox's (1809), Robert Haffey's (1810), John Osborne's (1810), and William Willis's (1812). Thnaks to William Graham for the reference.

During this period, America's industrial developments and transportation improvements meant that Petersburg artisans gained direct access to a wider range of material than ever before. Local "Hard Ware" stores opened, including the firm of Peter & Giese, which offered "American Manufactured" looking glasses, as well as window glass and a wide variety of specialized tools.¹⁸⁰ Francis Follet's shop, located at the sign of the "Gilt Anvil," sold a broad range of furniture-related metalwares, including "cabinet mounting."¹⁸¹ While many of these items had been regionally available before, they were now arriving directly to Petersburg in far greater numbers.

In addition to such external improvements to the local furniture-making trades after 1800, several significant internal developments emerged. For example, the structure of local shops underwent meaningful changes. Furniture-makers--and many other local artisans--increasingly entered into partnerships to pool their resources not only to meet the higher cost of operating a business in town but to keep pace with the growing variety of imported furniture wares. Partnerships became especially common among windsormakers, whose craft skills were particularly well suited to large-scale production. Windsormakers come closer than any other Petersburg furniture artisans to production on an industrial level. Numerous joint furniture-making ventures appear in Petersburg during this period, although the majority did not last more than a year or two. When partnerships dissolved, it was common for one artisan to retain control of the shop, while the other frequently moved on to different partnerships, locally or in other cities. As a result, confusing and rather incestuous patterns of business relationships

¹⁸⁰ Petersburg Republican, October 24, 1811.

¹⁸¹ Petersburg Republican, March 12, 1812.

began to appear among early nineteenth century Petersburg furniture-makers.

The eclectic career of Leonard Seaton illustrates the extent to which some local artisans relied on the partnership system. In 1812 he took over the Windsor chairmaking firm of Hobday & Seaton in Richmond after Hobday entered into another partnership with James Barnes, also a local Windsor chairmaker. By 1814 Seaton moved to Petersburg where he set up shop with Graves Mathews. Within a year Seaton was back in Richmond, while Mathews remained in Petersburg and later formed a Windsor chairmaking partnership with Alexander Brown before finally moving on to Raleigh, North Carolina where he found yet another partner. Soon afterwards, Seaton came back to Petersburg and established a short-lived joint venture with Hobday's ex-partner, James Barnes. Such complicated patterns suggest that furniture-makers were able to move from shop to shop without extensive damage to their careers, a conclusion further supported by the relative financial stability evidenced in the tax records. Partnerships not only allowed for increased production, but also reduced the cost of materials, rent and advertising. Such arrangements also seem to have served as a quick means of legitimating the artisan's reputation within the local trade community.

In sharing costs with another artisan, Petersburg furniture-makers became involved in a number of unusual partnerships. For example, in 1806 John Priest and George Dillworth advertised their sale of Windsor chairs, as well as wheat fans, wire work, riding chairs and varnish. A few years later Priest relocated to Nashville, Tennessee, where he continued to produce windsors, while Dillworth remained in town, manufacturing wheat fans,

"wove wire," and "rolling screens."¹⁸² Though the two worked in completely different trades, they clearly found an advantage pooling their resources. Another odd partnership occurred in 1814 with the union of John Lorrain and Louis Layssard, who advertised a service for the assembly and repair of looking glasses. When this venture failed, Layssard went on to a wide variety of furniture-making, blacksmithing, and entrepreneurial endeavors both locally and in North Carolina; Lorrain remained in town painting floorcloths and signs as well as formal landscapes and portraits, specialized trades not common in Petersburg prior to 1800. These unusual business arrangements, although short-lived, further indicate the expansion of Petersburg's artisan community. Additionally, they document the arrival of certain specialized skills not common during the colonial period when the town's small population and embryonic role as a regional commercial center could not support such ventures.

The introduction of distinct upholstery shops also serves as evidence of the increasing diversification of Petersburg's furniture industry. For example, in the 1790s, John Vaughan began working as a coachmaker, where he probably learned his upholstery skills. By 1808 he was advertising as an upholsterer, noting that he would "undertake to furnish SOFAS & CHAIRS of every description, Bed and Window CORNICES and CURTAINS." In a rare trade appeal aimed at both genders, he advised "ladies and gentlemen" that he would also repair and restuff "All kinds of sofas and Easy Chairs."¹⁸³ Petersburg attracted upholsterers from other furniture-making centers as well. Before moving to town in 1814, William Neal operated upholstery shops in Boston and

¹⁸² Petersburg Republican, February 7, 1817.

¹⁸³ Petersburg Intelligencer, May 31, 1808, 4-2.

Baltimore, where he advertised his "many years experience in France and England" and his ability to provide clients with "Drawing-room Curtains and Drapery of every description, executed in the first stile and elegance."¹⁸⁴

Upon his arrival in Petersburg, Neal established his upholstery business in a separate part of John DeJernatt's cabinet shop and offered a similar range of services as Vaughan, including wallpapering.¹⁸⁵

The net result of these internal and external trade developments was that Petersburg's furniture-makers were able to provide a broader range and greater quantities of wares than ever before. They were able to aim production to meet the needs of an expanding regional population.

Developments in the local Windsor trade offer further evidence of such growth. In general, the introduction of larger, faster, and more efficient lathe technology after 1800 meant that American windsormakers could more rapidly accomplish the repetitive turning processes used in the manufacture of these forms. Many Petersburg Windsormakers took advantage of these improvements and of augmented transportation systems, which made their wares accessible to a larger clientele.

Joel Brown, who worked in town for more than twenty years and who, like so many other Windsormakers, had strong ties to coachmaking, is in many ways representative of Petersburg's early nineteenth-century Windsor chairmaking community. He began as a riding chairmaker and then gradually concentrated on the production of Windsor chairs. He likely learned the turning and joinery skills necessary for the Windsor and coachmaking trades from his father, Samuel Brown, of Exeter Mills in Chesterfield County, who

¹⁸⁴ Baltimore Evening Post, Maryland, September 5, 1809, 3-3.

¹⁸⁵ Mercantile Advertiser, Petersburg, February 17, 1817, 3-1.

owned all of the "tools belonging to a wheel-wrights shop."¹⁸⁶ Alexander and Archer Brown, who during the same period were involved in Petersburg Windsor chairmaking operations, appear to have been close relatives and may well have had the same training.¹⁸⁷ By the 1790s Joel was working in Petersburg as a coachmaker. In 1804 he advertised not only a variety of riding chairs, but also "15 Dozen WINDSOR CHAIRS, Of different kinds" and two years later described his Windsor chairs as "elegant gilt, striped and plain," reflecting his coach painting skills.¹⁸⁸ Though he moved his "Windsor Manufactory" to Raleigh, North Carolina in 1816, Brown's prolific Old Street operation reflected the impressive size and production capabilities of Petersburg's larger shops and the town's status as a major Windsor manufacturing center for the region. Indeed, Brown once advertised that his "Windsor Chair Manufactory" had on hand 400 chairs and was finishing more every day--impressive production figures for a town of Petersburg's size.¹⁸⁹

A closer look at Brown's operation indicates that local Windsormakers provided a wide variety of services to meet the growing needs of Petersburg's local and regional clientele. Brown, for instance, proudly advertised that he produced the "newest and neatest fashions ever offered in Petersburg." In addition to making seating furniture, such as chairs, settees, and more

¹⁸⁶ The Republican, Petersburg, April 29, 1809, 3-3. Furniture historians have long recognized the similarity of the two trades, the spindled seat and legs of the Windsor chair technologically and aesthetically akin to the spoked hub of a wheel.

¹⁸⁷ For more a more detailed anaysis of the relationship of these three artisans, see the Brown listings in the Biographical Sketches, appendix A.

¹⁸⁸ The Petersburg Intelligencer, September 21, 1804, 3-5; The Republican, Petersburg, June 9, 1806, 3-5. The only known Virginia riding chair, located at Mount Vernon, and a painting entitled "View of the Town of Warrenton," at the Warren County Memorial Library, reveal that the form was essentially a windsor chair attached to a wheeled platform that was pulled by horses.

¹⁸⁹ Petersburg Intelligencer, September 25, 1807, 3-5.

specialized forms like "secretary chairs"--a design now often referred to as a writing arm Windsor--he made turned cribs and cradles, using the same spindled construction employed on Windsor seating furniture. Apprentices in his shop learned not only the technical skills to make such forms, but "the Art of Painting, Gilding, and Varnish Making." While "bed and wearing apparel" were the apprentices's responsibility, "washing, mending, and diet" were to be furnished by the master or, more likely, his wife or servant. Upon completion of the indenture, the new journeyman would receive fifty dollars.¹⁹⁰ In addition to Windsor chairmaking, Brown was involved in "house painting," as well as in making turned architectural elements, such as balusters and "columns for porticoes and porches in the neatest and most approved style."¹⁹¹ He was not alone among Virginia Windsor chairmakers in providing such a wide range of services and skills. Robert and Andrew McKim of Richmond produced turned architectural elements and turned wooden machine parts for the Virginia Manufactory of Arms.¹⁹² The Petersburg Windsor chairmaking firm of Seaton & Matthews provided "turning executed in all its various branches to suit mechanics."¹⁹³ Seaton and other local artisans would later add to their offerings "fancy painted chairs," either Windsor or conventional chair forms decorated, often elaborately, with paint and gold leaf.¹⁹⁴ Both the diversity of offerings and the considerable output of shops testifies to the general growth experienced by local furniture trades in the decades following the turn of the nineteenth century.

¹⁹⁰ Petersburg Intelligencer, March 26, 1811, 3-5.

¹⁹¹ Raleigh Register, January 15, 1819.

¹⁹² Cromwell, *passim*.; Virginia Argus, Richmond, April 9, 1814, 4-2.

¹⁹³ The Republican, Petersburg, May 2, 1814, 4-5.

¹⁹⁴ For example, the partnership of Seaton & Mathews, Petersburg Republican, September 8, 1818, 3-2.

Similar growth is evident in Petersburg's early nineteenth-century cabinetmaking operations as well. When George Mason died in 1813, his estate inventory revealed a well stocked ware-room--a separate shop used for the retail sale of finished wares. Additionally, there stood a three-story brick shop which housed at least eight workbenches (see Appendix C). Perhaps made in this shop was a neoclassic pembroke table which descended in his family, a form that further reveals Petersburg's continued interest in the earlier, "neat and plain" fashion.¹⁹⁵ At the time of cabinetmaker Alexander Taylor's death in 1820, he was involved in a large commission to refurnish the Blandford Lodge, which had burned down in 1819. Taylor's shop included twelve workbenches, three tool chests, a lathe, and an extensive assortment of cabinetmaking tools (see Appendix E). Just as impressive is John DeJernatt's simultaneous operation of cabinetmaking shops in both Petersburg and Richmond and the insurance valuation of his Petersburg shop for the astounding sum of \$4000.

Expansion and diversification of the cabinetmaking trade is also evidenced in the range of wares these artisans offered. For example, the partnership of Fore & Robertson advertised their manufacture of many fashionable forms, including "side-boards and bureaus, card, dining, and pembroke tables, secretaries and bookcases, candle and wash stands, &c. &c."¹⁹⁶ In 1815, William H. Russell took over the substantial cabinetmaking operation of his father-in-law, George Mason, and advertised that he had "on hand a very excellent stock of the best St. Domingo Mahogany, amongst which are some elegant curls." He added that he was able to "finish work of every

¹⁹⁵ MESDA file S-7134.

¹⁹⁶ The Republican, Petersburg, November 17, 1806, 4-3.

description and of the most fashionable kind, in a superior style to any in the place, having the best workmen procured."¹⁹⁷ In addition to his cabinetmaking services, Russell provided turnings "of every description." In 1819 John DeJernatt's inventory was described as "perhaps the most extensive in the state, amounting to upwards of \$5000 -- and for elegance, taste, and quality, not surpassed anywhere."¹⁹⁸ Such notices clearly demonstrate the substantial evolution Petersburg's furniture trades had undergone since the colonial period.

Part of this considerable growth included larger shops that, in turn, required an increased number of artisans to fill. Notably, after 1800, Petersburg's furniture operations expanded not only in size, but also in their inclusion of blacks and women in more significant roles. Profound advances were made by black furniture-makers, albeit slowly in an agricultural trade town where most blacks continued to process tobacco and other staples. For some time blacks had been involved in Virginia cabinetmaking shops, but primarily in subservient positions. For example, in 1755 Peter Scott of Williamsburg offered *for sale* "Two Negroes, bred to the business of a Cabinetmaker."¹⁹⁹ After the Revolution the rise in Virginia's free black population resulted in an increased number of independent black artisans. In 1800 of Petersburg's total population of thirty-five hundred citizens, fourteen hundred were slaves and four hundred and twenty eight were free blacks. Color divisions are evident in both the demographic arrangement of the town and the specific business relationships that existed. The urban black

¹⁹⁷ The Republican, Petersburg, October 3, 1815, 1-3.

¹⁹⁸ Petersburg Republican, June 15, 1819.

¹⁹⁹ Virginia Gazette, (Hunter), Williamsburg, p. 3, cited in Gusler, p. 25

population was primarily concentrated on lands east of Petersburg and across the river in what formerly was the village of Pocohantas.

In spite of the strong pattern of segregation, however, black artisans nevertheless made important advances. For example, John Ventus, who apprenticed and then worked as a cabinetmaker in Norfolk, opened a local shop in 1815 with John Raymond, also a free black. Significantly, they lived and worked in the heart of the furniture-making district on Old Street, on the property of Betsey Allegrue who, like Raymond and many other local blacks, was likely a native of Haiti.²⁰⁰ Raymond and Ventus had on hand a wide variety of cabinetwares which they could "recommend and dispose of on as accommodating terms, as any manufactory in the Borough....in the best and most fashionable style."²⁰¹ That a business operated by black artisans in a building with a black owner advertised services in direct competition with the products of white artisans represents a significant socio-economic achievement. Other free blacks in the furniture trades can be identified. For example, Toma, a native of Greensville County was apprenticed to cabinetmaker George Mason in 1809.²⁰²

Women represent another group who made important progress in Petersburg's furniture-making community during the early nineteenth century. Across Virginia, a small number of women broke through that occupation's significant gender barrier. For example, a "Mrs. Wells" of Fredericksburg advertised her "business of AN UPHOLDSTRESS [sic]" in 1802.²⁰³ Similarly, Mrs. Rachel Atkins, a "Carver, Gilder, and Picture Frame

²⁰⁰ This observation was brought to my attention by William Graham.

²⁰¹ Petersburg Republican, August 13, 1816, 3-6.

²⁰² Order Book No. 4, Greensville County, March 15, 1809, p. 345.

²⁰³ The Virginia Herald, Fredericksburg, November 30, 1802, 3-3-. It is interesting to note an advertisement in The Maryland Gazette, Annapolis,

Maker," enjoyed a brief career in Norfolk.²⁰⁴ In Petersburg, Mary Mason, the daughter of local chairmaker Jonathan Russell, took over an extensive cabinetmaking operation after the death of her husband, cabinetmaker George Mason. With her brother, William H. Russell, acting as shop foreman, she managed the business for several years until she remarried. Importantly, her involvement in a non-domestic trade represents the exception rather than the rule for local women. Suzanne Lebsock's pioneering analysis of working conditions for free women in early Petersburg concludes that "occupational choices were few, earnings were pitiful, and economic independence was very difficult to achieve."²⁰⁵ While poor young women, both black and white, became an important work force within the local tobacco and cotton processing industries, few at any socio-economic level opened businesses of their own. Although limited in number, the trade advances made by women and blacks after 1800 represent significant cultural achievements and constitute important topics that warrant further study.

In short, Petersburg's furniture trades experienced substantial development in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Both the size and diversity of local operations grew, as did the clientele they were serving. Certain tradespeople, especially Windsor chairmakers, began to produce wares on a scale which clearly indicates Petersburg's expanded role as a regional furniture-making center. The town's changing economic conditions led to the increased appearance of partnerships among artisans trying to cope with rising costs and the need for higher production. After 1800, local

September 21, 1748, "Ran away from....Northumberland county...Jeremiah Wells, born in Sussex [England]...brought up a farmer, and flags Chairs very well." No relationship between the two is known.

²⁰⁴ Hurst, pp. 70-72.

²⁰⁵ Lebsock, p. 154.

cabinetmakers offered a wider range of fashionable furniture forms than ever before. In spite of these important advances, however, other simultaneous economic developments proved harmful to the local furniture-making community and eventually lead to its demise.

Even with the furniture trade's impressive growth after 1800, numerous local makers experienced significant, if not disastrous financial difficulties. John DeJernatt, who operated one of the largest cabinet shops in town, was forced--for reasons not recorded--to sell his entire furniture stock in 1819; local records rarely indicate whether the closing or relocation of a furniture operation was caused by personal financial difficulties, broader market fluctuations, or simply the desire to try other business opportunities. Such interpretive obstacles make it difficult to determine how and why certain shops succeeded or failed. For example, neither the tax records or newspaper advertisements indicate why Joel Brown moved his large and apparently successful Windsor chair manufactory to Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1816. Nor do they reveal why Samuel White, who worked in town for more than thirty years and who had produced a wide variety of elegant furniture for the Skipwith family, made virtually no economic progress and assumed a relatively minor role in the local cabinetmaking community after 1800.

These attempts by local furniture-makers to try alternative ventures further suggests that the trade was experiencing financial difficulties. Many only achieved economic success after they left the trade. A number of local furniture-makers, like Anthony Hay in Williamsburg and Edmond Allmond in Norfolk, Robert McKeen, Thomas Fenner and Samuel H. Wills of Petersburg, eventually operated either ordinaries or "houses of entertainment." Alexander Taylor, Jr. commanded the infantry division of the local militia and was repeatedly elected to the Common Hall, Petersburg's main legislative body.

He also served as a Justice of the Peace and Coroner, the latter a fortuitous position for an artisan who both made coffins and rented a hearse. Perhaps the most successful ex-cabinetmaker was William Robertson, a native of Scotland who upon leaving the trade in 1806, became both a lawyer and a merchant. By 1816 he had replaced David Buchanan as the Petersburg agent for the firm of "Buckanon & Pollok," based in Glasgow with representatives in Richmond and New York.²⁰⁶ Robertson attained enough wealth to purchase "Cobbs," a Chesterfield County estate formerly owned by the Bolling family.²⁰⁷ In addition, Robertson was elected to represent Petersburg in the Virginia Legislature, served as Clerk of the Virginia Council of State, and saw several of his offspring attain great success.²⁰⁸

What led to the financial difficulties encountered by many Petersburg furniture-makers, and why did others abandon the trade for different business ventures? Without question, the primary factor was the rising competition posed by wares and artisans from northern manufacturing centers. In general, similar patterns of importation are common to many southern urban centers in the first decades of the nineteenth century and reflect the region's decreased reliance on trade with England. Indeed, the

²⁰⁶ Henrico County Will Book, No. 5, 1816-1822, March 4, 1816, p. 67. In the early 1780's, a "William Robertson" was employed in Glasgow, Scotland, by the trading house of Buchanan, Hunter & Company, a firm that sent a wide variety of wares directly to Petersburg. Because William Robertson, the Petersburg cabinetmaker, later became involved with the Glasgow firm of Buckanon & Pollok, it is possible that he was the same person employed by Buchanan, Hunter & Company, or a relative.

²⁰⁷ Jeffrey M. O'Dell, Chesterfield County: Early Architecture and Historic Sites, (Chesterfield County, 1982), pp. 301-303. Thanks to Williams Graham for this reference.

²⁰⁸ One son, Wyndham Robertson, was a famous railroad promoter and served as Governor of Virginia. Another son, Thomas Bolling Robertson was elected governor of Louisiana. A third, John Robertson, served as a Judge in Virginia. Thanks to William Graham for this reference.

physical manifestations of these changes are clear. Furniture-makers in the pre-Revolutionary South copied few northern designs, a practice which suggests that vast cultural and economic differences existed between the two regions. During the early national period, however, when trade contact between American coastal centers expanded considerably, furniture based on northern prototypes was increasingly produced by southern artisans. Facilitating this process were significant national transportation improvements and extensive northern industrial development that brought large quantities of fashionable and competitively priced northern furniture to the region.²⁰⁹

The South's growing taste for northern styles was facilitated by the arrival of artisans from that region who were unable to find steady employment in their highly competitive and over saturated home markets. These artisans brought with them numerous structural and stylistic conventions from a variety of northern furniture centers. For example, Henry Leiper, a Philadelphia cabinetmaker, became involved in a Petersburg cabinetmaking partnership with Thomas Fenner. Similarly, an 1807 advertisement in the Petersburg Intelligencer announced the arrival of "Jeremiah Parmelle, from the northward, cabinet maker," one year after "Samuel Parmele, from New York" established his cabinetmaking shop in Wilmington, North Carolina.²¹⁰ By 1816 local cabinetmaker and ware-room

²⁰⁹ Revealingly, by 1820 the dominance of the larger northern shops and industrial manufacturing procedures had a somewhat homogenizing effect on American furniture design; after that date it becomes progressively more difficult to identify specific regional cabinetmaking practices. Indeed, identifying distinctive regional craft traditions after 1820 may be best accomplished by studying the areas artisans moved to in order to get away from the competition created by the imported wares.

²¹⁰ Petersburg Intelligencer, December 29, 1807; Wilmington Gazette, November 25, 1806. Leiper appeared in Philadelphia's 1798 trade directory.

operator William Russell was able to offer not only a "fresh supply of Fancy and Windsor chairs from New York," and "curled hair mattresses from Philadelphia," but also "six or seven workmen, who served their time in the first shops in Philadelphia, New-York and Baltimore."²¹¹ Such artisans, able to replicate sophisticated northern forms, probably presented considerable competition to Petersburg's established furniture-makers. Northern artisans appear in other trades as well. For example, Sterling Woodward, a coachmaker in Dinwiddie County who rented shop space of an unspecified Windsor chair maker, advertised an extensive range of riding chairs, gigs, sulkeys, razees, stages, and carriages. He noted that "The whole of this Work has been made by the first rate Northern Workmen, who are entirely devoted to the finishing of work of the best kind."²¹²

Along with the arrival of northern makers came the inevitable importation of fashionable and competitively priced northern furniture. So great was this influx that John DeJernatt, who ran one of Petersburg's largest cabinet shops at that time, felt compelled to assure the public that his cabinetwares would compare with the many "specimens" of northern furniture already in the town and hastened to add that if he could "meet with sufficient encouragement, it would enable him to advance our own market, by giving the most approved workmen such prices as are given in New York for the best work."²¹³ Even combined efforts, however, had little effect.

²¹¹ Ibid., September 22, 1815, 4-1 and 4-4; Ibid., September 16, 1816, 4-5.

²¹² Intelligencer, & Petersburg Commercial Advertiser, December 17, 1819, 3-5. Evidence of the arrival of northern artisans can be found among architects as well. Alexander Paris served as architect for the Governor's Mansion and produced initial designs for the Valentine House (now the Valentine Museum) in Richmond. He also produced designs for the Bollingbrook Hotel in Petersburg. Thanks to William Graham for these references.

²¹³ Petersburg Republican, November 22, 1816, 3-6.

Petersburg's participation within the larger national economic system simply did not make possible large-scale furniture manufacturing. The town's growing importation of northern wares via improved transportation systems and the relative scarcity of the trades needed to produce furniture on an industrial level further limited the city's economic role. On an increasing scale through the first two decades of the nineteenth century, local residents and merchants alike recognized that furniture could be more cheaply and readily acquired from northern industrial sources.

Many Petersburg furniture-makers decided that instead of fighting such trends, they would instead assume a share of the local market by opening "cabinet ware-rooms" where imports could be sold alongside local manufactures. Thus the majority of Petersburg retail furniture warerooms between 1800 and 1820 were operated by *practicing* cabinetmakers, not by merchants. During that period a total of five Petersburg cabinet makers ran separate cabinet warerooms or "warehouses." Property and lot arrangements reflect this development; cabinet shops were increasingly moved toward the rear of the lot, while the retail warerooms were placed along the street, where prospective clients would be more likely to see their goods. According to Forsyth M. Alexander, the prevalent trend after 1800 involved the move from cabinetmaking to vending imported furniture wares. This pattern differs from the eighteenth-century trends and may well reflect changes caused by urban development.

Interestingly, Alexander also found that warehouses offering northern furniture were most likely to succeed in moderately sized port towns--like Petersburg--as opposed to larger cities where some degree of industrial

manufacture was the norm.²¹⁴ Petersburg's warehousemen, who boldly declared the quantity and quality of their imported furniture, clearly prospered. In 1811, for example, George Mason announced that his wareroom had for sale imported fancy and Windsor chairs from New York that were "superior to any heretofore offered in this place," a rather pointed reference in a town so abundantly occupied by Windsor chairmakers.²¹⁵ After 1820, local merchants also recognized the lucrative market for imported furniture and opened retail warerooms--essentially the equivalent of modern-day furniture stores--and soon assumed a major share of the local market.

Another new competing interest facing Petersburg's furniture-makers were "auction houses," created to process local estate sales, as well as large quantities of imported goods. Among the more active auctioneers was William Moore, who advertised for sale "the most superb assortment of furniture that was ever exhibited in Petersburg," consisting largely of imported examples. Moore hastened to add that he was not forsaking wares "of Virginia manufacture, and the pride of Virginia will not be sacrificed," yet later advertisements suggest the vast majority of his offerings were imported, usually from New York.²¹⁶ With such competition, by 1820 traditionally structured shops, whose production capabilities did not approach the larger northern shops, could not survive. Even ambitious local furniture-making projects like Alexander Taylor, Jr.'s commission to refurnish the Blandford Masonic Lodge that was destroyed by fire in 1819, often resulted from certain extenuating circumstances. No doubt in this instance Taylor's membership in the lodge contributed to his commission.

²¹⁴ Alexander, p. 35.

²¹⁵ Petersburg Republican, January 12, 1813, 4-5.

²¹⁶ American Star, Petersburg, October 18, 1817, 3-3.

Not surprisingly, the number of furniture-makers working in Petersburg dwindled after 1820; this pattern also emerged in contemporary Richmond.²¹⁷ Most furniture-makers simply could not compete with the growing number of auctioneers and warehousemen, who provided local clients with a broad range of competitively priced imports. It is important to recognize, however, that local furniture-making by no means disappeared completely after 1820. In 1825 Samuel Caldwell, whose sporadic furniture-making career in Petersburg began in 1810, announced the removal of his "Cabinet Ware-Room" to a large building "lower down Bank Street, a few doors above the corner of Sycamore, lately occupied by Mr. Rambaut's exchange," where he offered "New furniture, elegantly and substantially made."²¹⁸ He emphasized his employment of skilled artisans and his access to fashionable materials, adding that "any article will be made to order at short notice." In 1826 he joined a number of other cabinetmakers in Petersburg's Benevolent Mechanics Society, an organization which united local artisans and improved their ability to promote beneficial political and economic policy. As late as 1860, the local city directory listed a number of cabinetmakers, which suggests that the town continued to support a small number of shops that met local demand for custom designed furniture.²¹⁹ As with the earlier furniture operations, for example William Neal's upholstery business, these mid-nineteenth century shops also repaired broken furniture. After 1820, however, items such as a signed breakfast table made by Petersburg cabinetmaker William H. Badger, became the exception rather than the

²¹⁷ Zeno, p. 14.

²¹⁸ The Intelligencer and Petersburg Commercial Advertiser, November 24, 1825, 4-7.

²¹⁹ Petersburg City Directory for 1860

rule.²²⁰ By this period, such goods were more cheaply imported from cities like New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, and were more readily available at the many furniture warerooms and auction houses.

In short, the significant expansion of Petersburg's furniture trades in the first two decades of the nineteenth century reflect the town's reduced cultural and economic ties to Great Britain and its increased role as the primary market center for a large local and regional population. Increased trade specialization, larger and more productive furniture shops, and the socio-economic advances made by blacks and women serve as evidence of this growth. Petersburg's changing economy, however, effectively brought to an end the significant regional role played by local furniture-makers. While the town became integrated into America's emerging national economic system, northern manufactories assumed a leadership role in the provision of furniture. Contributing to this evolution were significant transportation improvements and interstate commercial networks which facilitated the movement of northern wares to towns like Petersburg.

In response to these changing patterns, some of Petersburg's more successful furniture-makers expanded their operations to include warerooms where imported goods could be offered side-by-side with their own productions. This transition was not financially feasible for less affluent furniture-makers, who had neither the capital nor the shop space to pursue such a venture. By 1820 a large percentage of Petersburg's furniture-makers, some successful and affluent, had either quit the trade or left town in search of markets where the services of local, small-scale shops were still needed.

²²⁰ Privately owned in Petersburg.

After that time, the prominent regional role assumed by Petersburg furniture-makers up to 1820 was significantly reduced.

CONCLUSION

The early cabinetmaking traditions of Petersburg must be viewed as reflections of larger cultural patterns. Developments in local furniture-making were inextricably bound to broader socio-economic fluctuations which occurred throughout Virginia and elsewhere. By 1820 Petersburg's furniture-making industry had in many respects come full circle. In its formative years, the small trading center focused solely on the production and processing of tobacco. Affluent residents who desired fashionable furniture were forced to import wares from local urban centers, from England, and to a lesser degree from New England. With the incorporation of Petersburg in 1748 and the resulting population growth, an increasingly diverse selection of trades, including furniture-making, was established locally. Indicative of broader cultural trends, Petersburg's early furniture fashions relied strongly on British sources and its popularity both locally and throughout the inland counties by the time of the Revolutionary War signifies the town's emergence as the primary market for much of southern Virginia and northern North Carolina.

Because of its advantageous location at the upper navigational reaches of the Appomattox River, Petersburg rapidly expanded its role as a regional commercial center. It received profitable rural cash crops in return for an ever-expanding range of locally made and imported goods, including the manufactures of local furniture-makers. After the Revolutionary War, local artisans provided fashionable cabinetwares that, to a large degree, serve as the descendents of the earlier, Anglo-influenced, *"neat and plain"* style. Windsor chairmaking and, later, fancy chairmaking became important parts of Petersburg's furniture production. The manufacture of these forms was intimately tied into the town's substantial coachmaking industry. Although

harsh post-war trade restrictions and the resulting protectionist legislation imposed economic limitations which lasted well into the early nineteenth century, Petersburg's status as the commercial hub for an extensive network of inland counties provided it with an economic buffer that allowed local artisans and retail shops to survive and even prosper.

After 1800, the introduction of northern cabinetwares in quantity directly into Petersburg began to alter local cabinet trade patterns. Ironically, the rapid economic and physical development of the town as a retail and wholesale center, which initially allowed its cabinetmaking industry to flourish, promoted the increased importation of furniture and contributed to the decline of local shops. After 1820 Petersburg's role as a regional furniture-making center had undergone a transformation. Local economic development now centered on the development of wholesale and retail operations as well as on the continued processing of valuable cash crops such as wheat, cotton, and tobacco. The catastrophic fire of 1815 hastened these changes. By the 1820s local furniture-makers and consumers alike took advantage of the readily accessible manufactures of northern furniture centers.

The greatest beneficiaries of the massive improvements to transportation systems in and around Petersburg were not local furniture-makers, but those involved in the sale of imported wares. In general, local mercantile operations flourished after 1820. They extended their trade networks far into western Virginia, North Carolina, and eastern Tennessee. By 1840 the town was home to no less than sixteen major wholesale operations and one-hundred twenty one retail stores whose united net profits exceeded \$1,000,000.²²¹ Mercantilists began to dominate the local political structures,

²²¹ Scott and Wyatt, pp. 71-73

which in turn allowed them to affect policies in their favor. Such legislation was often not in the best interest of local tradespeople. During this period, Petersburg became the hub of Virginia's burgeoning railway system, a lucrative development that expanded the town's role as a commercial center for a large part of the state and extended its economic influence even further into the surrounding southern states.

Thus the very forces that promoted the remarkable growth of furniture-making in Petersburg between 1760 and 1820--a growing local and regional clientele, expanding trade networks and substantial transportation improvements--eventually led to the demise of local furniture-making. As in the earliest years of the town, much of the furniture purchased after 1820 was imported from other manufacturing centers. No single event brought about this change. Instead, Petersburg's steady incorporation into America's emerging national and industrial economy was caused as much by international trade developments between 1780 and 1820 as by the catastrophic fire in 1815.

The end of furniture-making's "golden age" in Petersburg should by no means be seen as evidence of any local economic demise. The opposite is true and many mercantile and industrial operations experienced substantial growth after this date. Instead, a complex merging of cultural, demographic, and economic patterns promoted the development of a substantial furniture-making tradition in Petersburg between 1760 and 1820. As these systems evolved, so too did the role of the local furniture trades.

APPENDIX A - *The following artisans worked in Petersburg or in the adjacent areas. The dates beside their names correspond to the dates for which they are noted in the Petersburg records. The sources for each artisan are listed at the end of each entry. All of the newspaper references and court records can be found in the research files of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The personal property and land taxes were gleaned from the original records and microfilm copies at the Virginia State Library in Richmond.*

ARBUTHNOT, THOMAS
Cabinetmaker, Coffinmaker

(1765-1768)

Arbuthnot first appears in the Petersburg area records in 1765, when he provided the first of three inexpensive coffins for Bristol Parish Church. A 1766 advertisement reveals that he was working in the village of Blandford, just outside of Petersburg and required the services of "ONE or two journeymen CABINETMAKERS, who are sober and industrious, and understand their business well." This suggests that Arbuthnot's business was similar in size to other contemporary urban Virginia cabinetmaking operations.

Relatively little is known of Arbuthnot's career in Petersburg. In 1768 he announced his intention to leave the colony, and notified all creditors and debtors to settle their accounts. Whether or not Arbuthnot ever left is unclear. By 1775 he was living in the Hanover County residence of Mr. Robert Patterson, recently deceased. Hanover, an active county seat with a courthouse and an ordinary among its primary features, may well have provided a modest flow of customers for Arbuthnot. Shortly thereafter, Arbuthnot announced a temporary departure from Virginia:

HANOVER TOWN, Dec. 27, 1775

I intend to leave the Colony for a short Time,
on a Journey to South Carolina. All persons
indebted to me at present are desired to pay
the same to Leighton Wood, Jun. whom I have
authorized to five sufficient Discharges.
Gentlemen and ladies may be supplied with all

Sort of Cabinet Work at my Shop in this Town,
which will be left under the Direction of Mr.
George Brown.

Arbuthnot was back in the Richmond/Hanover area in 1778 when he advertised for the return of a stolen or runaway horse, and offered the impressive sum of £5 for the horse and £10 for information leading to conviction of the thief. Whether Arbuthnot was still producing furniture, however, is not clear.

The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish Virginia, 1720-1789, pp. 202, 213, 216.

The Virginia Gazette, (Purdie), June 13, 1766, 3-1.

The Virginia Gazette, (Purdie and Dixon), January 1, 1767, 4-2.

The Virginia Gazette, (Purdie and Dixon), July 27, 1768, 3-2.

The Virginia Gazette, (Dixon and Hunter), June 17, 1775, 3-1.

The Virginia Gazette, (Dixon and Hunter), January 13, 1776, 3-3.

The Virginia Gazette, (Dixon and Hunter), November 13, 1778, 3-1.

BADGER, JOSEPH (1787-1803)
Painter, "Colour Shop" Proprietor, Coachmaker

In 1787 "Jos.Badger" paid taxes on two black servants over the age of sixteen and one under. By 1789 his Petersburg coachmaking shop was in operation. That year, he and Deveraux Jarrat Manly, a local coachmaker and wheelwright, were called upon to appraise the estate of Jones Allen Dean. Badger later inventoried Manley's estate. In 1791 Badger placed ads in Petersburg and Williamsburg newspapers announcing the opening of a "RETAIL COLOUR SHOP...at the upper end of Old Street, near the tanyard, where country gentlemen and others, may be furnished with all kinds of paints used in common, either in their natural state, or prepared for the brush." Badger, who simultaneously maintained his "COACH AND SIGN PAINTING" business, also supplied "linseed, and train oil, putty, window glass, and paint brushes," as well as a number of rather specialized services such as custom-made hat cases

and umbrella repairing. Certainly, the glazing supplies, paints, and clear finishes available at Badger's Colour Shop would have been of use to local cabinetmakers and Windsor chairmakers.

In 1793 Badger, along with a number of other local men, was fined 400 pounds of tobacco for failing to appear when called for Grand Jury duty. The assessment speaks strongly of the agrarian orientation of the local economy. In August of that year, Badger took a "Poor Orphan Boy" named George Gilmore as an apprentice. The young man who formerly had been apprenticed to Robert Scott, occupation unknown. Badger continued his coachmaking and decorating activities, including the sale of chariots, coaches, phaetons, and double chairs, some of which were imported directly from Philadelphia. By 1794, the partnership of "Badger & Shiphard" was formed and advertised its ability to provide "COACH & SIGN PAINTING" and "Coach Japaning and Gilding." The firm also offered house painting and paper hanging.

A 1796 insurance assessment describes Badger's "dwelling" as a two-story wood frame residence with a detached kitchen and the "painter's shop" as a small single-story wood frame work shop. Badger's ownership of these buildings suggests that he was a relatively successful artisan and merchant. Further indicating this his active participation in the social and political life of the community. For example, in 1796 he was elected to the Common Hall of Petersburg. In that legislative body, he served on a committee assigned to help prevent the local arrival of smallpox, a disease that had ravaged Norfolk the year before, through the promotion of inoculations and the development of hospitals. He was later appointed by the Petersburg Court as one of the "Captains of Patroles in Water Street Ward."

In 1797, Badger entered into a new coachmaking partnership with Joseph Atkins, selling and repairing "Carriages" in the shop formerly

occupied by Deveraux J. Manley. This location was the second shop site for the partners; the first, located across from Robert Armistead's Tavern, was subsequently rented by William Thompson, a wheelwright from Richmond. Badger alone gave notice in 1799 for the application of three or four apprentices to the "Coachmaking and Smith's business" and stated his preference for "boys of colour to the Smith's business." The advertisement reveals that his was a relatively large and diverse shop. He retailed "large glass suitable for pictures, clocks, bookcases, show-boxes, &c," which he could "cut to any size that may be wanting." a service needed by local cabinetmakers and others customers.

In 1801 Badger became involved in yet another coachmaking partnership, called "Badger & Leath." It offered a full range of coachmaking and decorating services. Badger died in 1803 and his obituary described him as "a kind and affectionate husband, a tender father, a good neighbor, and an useful citizen" who left behind "five small children...to bewail his loss." His wife Ann was named administratrix of his estate, and she sold off a number of finished and unfinished coaches, as well as some old carriage bodies. Ann stayed on the property and in 1813 an insurance appraisal estimated that the nearly demolished "old Painter's Shop" was not worth one hundred dollars.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book 1, 1784-1805, , p. 135, May 22, 1789.
Virginia Gazette, Petersburg, April 30, 1794, 1-1.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, September 29, 1791, 4-4.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, July 26, 1792, 4-3.
Independent Ledger, and Petersburg and Blandford Public Advertiser, Petersburg, May 8, 1793, 4-2.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1791-1797, p.81, June 3, 1793; p.85, August 5, 1793; p.98, November 5, 1793.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, September 6, 1793, 4-3.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, May 20, 1794, 4-3.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, February 9, 1796, 4-1.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 10, , p.26, May 11, 1796.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, September 9, 1796, 2-3.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, p.253, March 13, 1797.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, September 12, 1797, 3-2.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, May 7, 1799, 3-4.
Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer, April 1, 1800, 4-5.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, p. 75, February 2, 1802.
The Petersburg Republican, November 16, 1804, 1-1.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 68, p. 1171, June 4, 1813.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1794.

BARNES, JAMES (see SEATON, LEONARD)

BIRD, JONATHAN
Cabinetmaker

(1802-1804)

Jonathan Bird was taxed by the city of Petersburg in 1802 and 1803, and in 1804 was listed as one of several "cabinetmakers" who had letters remaining at the Petersburg Post Office. By August of that year, however, an advertisement in the Raleigh Register announced the newly established cabinetmaking firm of "Bird & Reynolds" in Warrenton, North Carolina. Interestingly, in 1803, a cabinetmaker named "Thomas Renald" was recorded as having mail in Petersburg, almost certainly a reference to Thomas Reynolds, Bird's partner who he may well have known prior to their joint business venture. Bird & Reynolds advertised their ability to produce "Furniture of the most fashionable kinds," as well as "Furniture of every kind for common use"-- a rare reference to the manufacture of utilitarian furniture wares. They also had a "stock of elegant Mahogany, which they will work into Articles suitable for the adornment of genteel Apartments, either plain, inlaid, or ornamented."

By 1807 the partnership had dissolved and Bird relocated to Charleston, South Carolina. Bird's obituary was published in the Charleston Courier on September 24, 1807, and read "Died, on Sullivan's Island, Mr. JONATHAN BIRD, Cabinet Maker, aged 30 years, a native of Yorkshire, in England." The Raleigh

Register also announced his death, noting he was "formerly of Warrenton." His estate inventory included "1 Chest Tools" and an expensive silver watch.

A small neoclassic table stamped "J. Bird" and scratched with the date "1792" has been published, though as John Bivins notes, the crudely incised date is questionable, as is the attribution to Charleston, South Carolina, where the use of cherry as a primary wood was not common.

Petersburg Republican, July 19, 1803

Petersburg Republican, October 6, 1804, 3-3.

Raleigh Register, North Carolina, August 6, 1804.

Charleston Courier, South Carolina, September 24, 1807, 3-1.

Raleigh Register, October 1, 1807.

George Michael, George Michael's Treasury of Federal Antiques, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1972), p. 37.

John Bivins, The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820, (Winston-Salem: The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1986), p. 455 and pp. 495-496.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1802-1804.

The following three entries examine Alexander, Archer and Joel Brown, three Windsor chairmakers who were apparently related. During the early nineteenth century, the three were involved in a variety of joint, as well as individual business ventures. If, in fact they were related, their selection of this trade was a reasonable one. Records indicate that Joel was the son of Samuel Brown, a wheelwright in nearby Chesterfield County. Wheelwrights employed many of the same turning and joining skills used in the production of Windsor seating furniture. Probably Joel's Windsor skills were honed at his father's shop. Despite the apparent individual business and social achievements by all three of the Windsor chairmaking Browns, particularly by Joel and Alexander, between 1815 and 1820 all relocated to other regions. Like so many other local artisans, they apparently were victims of Petersburg's increasing reliance on the importation of fashionable, yet inexpensive furniture from the North.

BROWN, ALEXANDER
Chairmaker

(1798-1820)

Alexander Brown of Petersburg, likely a close relative of local Windsormakers Joel and Archer Brown, first appears in the Petersburg land tax records, which in 1798 indicate his ownership of property on Market Street

(see Brown, Archer and Brown, Joel). The personal property tax lists for 1800 note that he paid \$40 for an unspecified business license with a John Brown, possibly yet another relative. Little is known of Alexander's business activities for the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century, although during this time he consistently owned a number of male and female slaves, several horses, and a riding chair. He served as Mayor of Petersburg in 1808 and 1809. Brown's affluence is clearly indicated in the highly-detailed 1815 tax lists, including ownership of a wide variety of mahogany case furniture and "12 bamboo or cane chairs," possibly of his own manufacture.

In October 1816, Brown advertised in the Richmond Commercial

Compiler:

To Chair Makers:

The Subscriber being about to remove to the Country, Will rent for the ensuing year, And possession given first January, his shop, to which is attached a pleasant lodging room and small kitchen. The rent will be accommodating. He will also furnish timber for 200 chairs complete, at a liberal price; and will rent tools--if required.

ALEXANDER

BROWN

N.B. The above is well established as a chairmaker's shop, being the same for many years occupied by Joel Brown in the same business.

Earlier that year, Joel Brown, who for years had operated an extensive "Windsor Chair Manufactory" in Petersburg, moved his business to Raleigh, North Carolina. Although he took over the shop site, it is not clear whether Alexander had any direct business relationship with Joel. Interestingly, that same year, Archer Brown moved his Windsor operation to Lynchburg, Virginia.

By 1817 Alexander Brown had established his own Windsor chairmaking partnership with Graves Matthews, an artisan who had formerly worked in Richmond and was the ex-partner of Petersburg Windsor chairmaker Leonard Seaton (see Matthews, Graves and Seaton, Leonard). That year Matthews and Brown offered a "TEN CENTS REWARD" for a runaway apprentice named James Denoon, who was described as "upwards of 20 years old, five feet three or four inches high, had black hair which curls, blue eyes, and is very much marked in the face by the small pox." Several months later the partners advertised again:

MATTHEWS & BROWN
CHAIRMAKERS,
SIGN-PAINTERS & TURNERS,

RESPECTFULLY inform their customers and the public in general, that they have now on hand and intend to keep, at their Shop on Old street, a few doors above French's Tavern, a general assortment of elegant
WINDSOR CHAIRS,
Settees, Bedsteads, Cradles, Gigg-Seats, Writing Chairs, and every other article in their line; -
-which they offer for sale, on the most accommodating terms.

PAINTING & GILDING
of every description, executed in the neatest manner, on short notice. Orders in either branch of their business, will be thankfully received & punctually attended to.

Their production of a broad range of Windsor furniture forms and their services of turning, painting, and gilding closely parallel those offered by Joel Brown while he was working in Petersburg, a further suggestion of a business relationship between Joel and Alexander. No further references to the partnership of Matthews & Brown or to Alexander Brown's individual activities are known. By 1818 the cabinetmaking partnership of Lewis Marks, Machie I'Anson, and Ezra Stith advertised their new shop located "a few doors above

French's Tavern." Possibly they were in the shop once occupied by Matthews & Brown (see I'Anson, Machie D.).

Beginning in 1818, Brown paid Robert Bolling, by this time the wealthiest landowner in the city, the considerable sum of \$700 for a lot east of Sycamore Street that was adjacent to "Turners Vendue Store." In 1819 Brown was taxed for this property and for his "former mansion" on Market Street, an indication that he was living elsewhere. By 1820 Brown, who then lived in Huntsville, Alabama, was taxed only for the Market Street property which had a total value of \$4275.

The Republican, Petersburg, June 9, 1806, 3-5.

Richmond Commercial Compiler, December 23, 1816.

American Star, Petersburg, June 23, 1817, 2-4.

American Star, Petersburg, August 7, 1817, 3-4.

Intelligencer, & Petersburg Commercial Advertiser, March 24, 1818, 4-5.

The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, June 25, 1819, 3-3.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1798-1820.

Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1798-1820.

BROWN, ARCHER

(1803-1807)

Windsor Chairmaker, Coachmaker

Like Joel and Alexander Brown, Archer Brown produced a broad range of Windsor seating furniture in Petersburg during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. He first appears in the tax records in 1803 and two years later the dissolution of the "Copartnership" of John N. Smith and Archer Brown was announced, "The business will be carried on at the same place by Archer Brown." A week later, an advertisement for their shop on "Sycamore-street and corner of Back-street, Petersburg" appeared in the Petersburg Republican:

The Subscriber

BEGS leave to inform his friends and the public, that he has now on hand a large and complete assortment of Windsor Chairs and Cribs, and can be supplied on a short notice with Riding Chair bodies, Writing Chairs, Settees, Cradles, &c. which he warrants to be strong and elegantly finished. They are offered for sale on reasonable terms for cash, country or West India produce.

Two years earlier, Joel Brown of Petersburg was combining the trades of Windsor chairmaking and coachmaking, one of many examples of the strong connection in Petersburg between the two trades. By 1806 Archer Brown, like Joel, had a shop on Old Street and was making "Settees, Cribs, Cradles, &c.," as well as "Secretary Chairs," the latter probably a reference to the same type of "Writing Chairs" Joel Brown sold. Today they are often referred to as "writing-arm Windsors." In 1806 Joseph Hill, a gardener in Sussex County, announced that trees from his nursery would be sold in Petersburg by "Mr. A. Brown, coachmaker, at the sign of the Eagle, Old street." This combination was one of the more unusual business arrangements involving an early Petersburg furniture-maker.

Tax records indicate that Brown resided in the city until 1807 and that he was by no means affluent. Where Brown went after that year is unclear. In 1812 he offered for sale "his Tract of Land on which he presently resides, containing 180 acres, lying in Dinwiddie county, 16 miles from Petersburg, on Nemozine road." The notice added that the parcel "is a good stand for a tavern, one having been there for many years." It is not known whether Brown, like other local furniture-makers such as Robert McKeen, Thomas Fenner, and Samuel H. Caldwell, had any involvement with tavernkeeping.

By 1816, Archer Brown was in Lynchburg where he advertised his business:

Archer Brown

WINDSOR-CHAIR Maker--Sign and Ornamental Painter, &c.--Beggins leave to inform the public that he still continues to carry on his usual business of making Chairs, Settees, Cribs and Cradles, and executing Sign and Ornamental Painting in the neatest manner. The materials of which his work is made he warrants to be of the best kind, and all work in the newest and most fashionable Stile.

N.B. Those wishing to be supplied with any articles in his line, are solicited to call at his workshop, opposite the Franklin Hotel. Where he has on hand, and will continue to keep a large supply of every article in his line, which will be disposed of on the most accommodating terms.

Later that year he entered into a partnership with John Hockaday, a cabinetmaker and carpenter who for years worked in Williamsburg. They signed a ten year lease for a lot on Second Street, paying \$150.00 per year for the first five years and \$250.00 per year for the second five years. Probably there were no building on the lot at the time of this contract, which stated "There are no improvements on the lot.....Brown and Hockaday may remove any improvements they make at any time during the lease period." No further references to either the partnership, or to Archer Brown's furniture-making activities are known.

Petersburg Intelligencer, September 21, 1804, 3-5.

The Petersburg Republican, January 18, 1805, 1-4.

The Petersburg Republican, January 22, 1805, 3-3.

The Republican, Petersburg, June 9, 1806, 3-5.

The Republican, Petersburg, March 30, 1812, 3-5.

Petersburg Order Book No. 5, 1810-1815, January 11, 1815, p. 75.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1803-1816.

Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1803-1816.

BROWN, JOEL (1796-1815)
Windsor Chairmaker, Coachmaker, Housepainter

Joel Brown, who was one of Petersburg's most prolific furniture-makers, was one of the few local artisans to leave behind documented examples of his work. A label found on an undated Windsor chair (MESDA file S-4611C) reads:

_____Windsor Chairs
 MADE AND SOLD BY
Joel Brown
 OLD STREET -- Petersburg
 WITH all kind of Fancy Chairs, Settees and
 Cribbs for Children; riding Chair Bodies in
 the neatest & newest fashions, Columns
 turned for Porticos and Porches; Cabinet
 turning executed in the neatest manner;
 Orders from the country will be attended to.
 N.B. A constant supply of Copal and Japan
 Varnishes.

The Petersburg tax records first list Joel Brown in 1796. That year a "Samuel Brown," his father's name, was also taxed in town. Between 1802 and 1804 Joel paid an annual \$15 fee for an unspecified business license. Interestingly, Alexander Brown had purchased licenses from the city in 1800 and 1801. By 1803 Joel Brown insured his two buildings on Market Street in the High Street Ward. They were a two-story wooden dwelling "underpinned with stones & cellar underneath" and a wooden one-story carriage house.

In 1804 Joel advertised for sale a variety of riding chairs and "15 Dozen WINDSOR CHAIRS, Of different kinds." One year later he took on Wayne Evans, orphan of Henry Evans, as an apprentice "Windsor Chair maker." Brown's advertisement of April 1806 included an illustrated Windsor chair with "J.B." engraved on the seat:

FOR SALE

FROM 15 to 20 dozen well finished Windsor Chairs of different kinds, elegant gilt, striped and plain--and are daily finishing Chairs of every description. Riding Chair bodies in the neatest and newest fashions. Settees, Cribs, Cradles, &c. &c. Those wishing to furnish themselves with these articles, will find it well worth their while to apply at the subscriber's shop, on Old-Street, a few doors above the Post-Office--at the sign of the Woman with a Chair in her Hand.

The "woman" on Brown's shop sign was identified in a later notice as "Hope," an allegorical image portrayed on a wide variety of American decorative and utilitarian wares during the early national period. Shortly after he placed this advertisement, Brown offered 30 dozen Windsor chairs of different kinds "priced from one to three dollars each," as well as settees, cribs, cradles, and ten "Secretary Chairs."

Tax records from 1800 onward reflect Brown's increasing financial success. In any given year up to 1816, he was annually taxed for as many as four adult white males and four adult black males. Indeed, slaves proved to be a valuable commodity. In 1807 he sold several servants to pay a deed of trust to Thomas B. Robertson, a local lawyer and the brother of local cabinetmaker William Robertson (see Robertson, William). That year Brown announced his "WINDSOR CHAIR MANUFACTORY" on Old Street, which had on hand "400 Windsor Chairs of different kinds, Elegant gilt, striped and plain. He added that "ladies and gentlemen wishing to furnish themselves with chairs, settees, cribs, cradles, &c. will find it worthy of notice call at the shop, as I have the newest and neatest fashions ever offered in Petersburg at reduced prices, for cash or country produce." While Brown's earliest advertisements suggest his primary role as a coachmaker, it is clear that by this period he was primarily focused on the production of Windsor seating furniture--a theory supported

by the diminishing mention of riding chair work and its movement to the bottom of his notices.

Brown's father, Samuel Brown of Exeter Mills in Chesterfield County, died in 1809. Joel and his mother, Elizabeth, oversaw the sale of his father's personal property that included "tools belonging to a wheel--wrights shop." If his father was, in fact, a wheelwright, Joel Brown probably apprenticed with him and learned the turning and joinery skills also used in the production of Windsor seating furniture and riding chairs. While settling his father's estate, Brown continued to expand his Petersburg Windsor chairmaking business. In 1811 he advertised for "THREE APPRENTICES....of respectable parentage and good character." He added that the "Boys will also be taught the Art of Painting, Gilding, and Varnish Making," skills utilized in the production of decorated Windsor seating furniture. This notice provides a rare glimpse into the lifestyles of apprentices, noting that each "shall furnish himself with his bed and wearing apparel; his washing, mending, and diet to be furnished him" and that each would "receive 50 dollars when free."

In 1812 with the onset of hostilities between America and England, Brown volunteered for military activity. Prior to leaving Petersburg, Brown placed the following announcement in August, 1812:

DURING my absence in the service of my country, I have employed Mr. Elijah Crages, late of Georgetown, District of Columbia, to carry on my Windsor Chair Manufactory. His knowledge in that line, and strict attention thereto, I have no doubt will give full satisfaction to those who favor him with their custom.

No further references to the aforementioned Elijah Crages, in Petersburg or elsewhere, are known.

By May, 1814 Brown returned to Petersburg and offered for sale a carriage and "Ten to Twelve Dozen elegant finished Windsor Chairs," adding that "He continues to manufacture and sell all articles in his profession." Brown expanded into the "HOUSE PAINTING" business by April 1815. Under an engraving of a hand and brush, Brown advertised his twenty years of related experience and noted that "A sample of his painting may be seen in the new brick building belonging to Mr. Haffey, at present occupied by Messrs. Redfield & Co as a store." At the same time he noted that he had "A few dozen WINDSOR CHAIRS on hand and will continue to finish the same as heretofore." That same year, Thomas Cosby moved his "Saddlers' Shop" to Brown's house on Water Street. The 1815 tax records reveal that Brown owned a variety of large mahogany case pieces, as well as a silver watch and several oil portraits. In addition to the Water Street property, specifically lot 3, Brown also rented a lot in the Gillfield area of town, though its low rental rate suggests that there were no buildings on site.

Despite his apparent success in Petersburg, Joel Brown relocated to Raleigh, North Carolina, by June 1816. Perhaps he, like so many other Petersburg artisans during that period, was not able to compete with the massive arrival of imported wares. Six months later Alexander Brown offered Joel's former Old Street shop for rent, noting that it had "attached a pleasant lodging room and a small kitchen." Joel continued to be taxed for the Water Street property through 1818. In December 1816 he announced the arrival of his "Windsor Chair Manufactory, from Petersburg, Va. to the house lately occupied by Thomas Cobbs, on Hillsborough street" in Raleigh. A year earlier Cobbs had purchased the entire Windsor chairmaking stock of George W. Grimes, another former Petersburg Windsor maker who had turned his attention to coach and sign painting (see Grimes, George W.). Brown noted

that he was "preparing and will in a few weeks be able to supply all demands in his line, in the neatest and most fashionable style; Chairs, Settees, &c. with Gold, or ornament them to direction" and that "He will likewise execute Sign Painting and Gilding, in the neatest manner and on the shortest notice." The addition of sign painting to his repertoire probably reflects decorative skills honed both as a coachmaker and Windsor chairmaker. In 1817 Brown took on Ransom P. Parker of Wake County "as apprentice to the Windsor chairmaker's trade."

As he had in Petersburg, Brown apparently prospered in Raleigh. In 1817 he moved the "WINDSOR CHAIR ESTABLISHMENT" to a lot on Market Street "where he has erected a very commodious building for the purpose--and having procured the best Workmen from the North, intends carrying on the business very extensively." From this location, Brown announced that "He has now on hand, and shortly will have finished in the first stile of elegance, a large quantity of Chairs, Settees, Cribs, and Cradles." Simultaneously, he advertised for sale "that valuable corner lot" he formerly occupied at "MARSHALL'S CORNER" fronting "the building now erecting for a Museum," and added that "Those wishing to purchase an advantageous situation for a Mercantile, or other business, have a chance which they ought not to let pass their notice, as it is not probable they will ever meet with the like opportunity in the City." Raleigh cabinetmaker Alexander Ross moved into part of Brown's new building on Market Street, where he offered to "finish as elegant and fashionable furniture as ever was imported from the north."

"A GREAT BARGAIN!" was offered by Brown in January 1819 referring to the sale of his house and shop, buildings "well calculated for a Coach-maker, or any other mechanic." In March he announced that he was "WISHING to remove from this place as soon as he can adjust his unsettled business and

accounts" and added that "He also begs leave to inform his friends that he shall continue the Windsor Chair Making, until he can wind up his affairs here-- and from the stock of materials he has now on hand, will be able to finish a large quantity, of Chairs in a short time." At the same time, Brown noted a runaway apprentice named Humphrey Ashburn, age 17. By June, a "Public sale" of Brown's lots and "dwelling house" was announced, the house well suited for a "commodious boarding house, or Tavern."

Interestingly, Brown continued to produce furniture, offering "from 12 to 15 dozen Windsor Chairs of different pattern--some of which are elegantly gilt and ornamented." In the same newspaper, Brown placed an illustrated announcement depicting two columns with a swag draped between, framing a Windsor chair. He informed the citizens of Raleigh that he would "continue to carry on the above business during his stay in this place" and that he would turn "columns for porticos or porches in the neatest and most approved style....A sample of my work may be seen in Dr. Burges's new porticos, and at my shop at this time." Though he was still in town as of August 1819 engaged in a legal squabble with a local druggist, no further mention is known of his activities in Raleigh or elsewhere.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 29, June 25, 1803, p. 2059.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, September 15, 1804.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, December 2, 1805.

The Republican, Petersburg, June 9, 1806, 3-5.

The Republican, Petersburg, October 20, 1806, 2-5.

The Republican, Petersburg, November 17, 1806, 3-5.

The Republican, Petersburg, April 2, 1807, 1-4.

Virginia Apollo, May 30, 1807, 3-5.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, September 25, 1807, 3-5.

The Republican, April 29, 1809, 3-3.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, March 26, 1811, 1-1.

The Republican, August 24, 1812, 1-1.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, August 28, 1812, 1-1.

The Republican, Petersburg, May 20, 1814, 4-3.

Petersburg Daily Courier, June 22, 1815, 4-4.

The Republican, Petersburg, October 10, 1815, 4-5.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 15, 1815, 4-5.
Richmond Commercial Compiler, December 23, 1816, 3-4.
The Raleigh Register, December 29, 1815, 3-2.
The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, July 5, 1816, 4-3.
The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, November 15, 1816, 4-3.
Raleigh Register, May 16, 1817.
Wake County Court Minutes, North Carolina, November 20, 1817.
Raleigh Minerva, April 10, 1818.
Raleigh Register, January 15, 1819.
The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, March 5, 1819, 4-1.
The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, March 19, 1819, 3-3.
The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, June 25, 1819, 3-3.
The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, August 20, 1819, 3-4.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1796-1819.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1796-1819.

CALDWELL, SAMUEL R.
Cabinetmaker, Grocer

(1810-post 1820)

In 1810, Samuel R. Caldwell and Samuel H. Wills announced the opening of their cabinetmaking shop:

The Subscribers
 HAVING lately purchased a large assortment
 of Elegant Mahogany, think it expedient to
 inform their friends and the citizens of
 Petersburg in general, that they will execute
 all kinds of CABINET WORK with neatness and
 dispatch, & on the most moderate terms.
 Orders from the country duly attended to, and
 furniture packed up in the best manner by
 CALDWELL & WILLS.

Two years later William Gunn, an eleven year old orphan, was apprenticed specifically to Caldwell to learn the trade of cabinetmaking. By 1815 the partnership of "Caldwell & Wills" was dissolved. Shortly thereafter, Caldwell announced the removal of his "Cabinet Making Shop" to the High Street house formerly occupied by coachmaker James Atkins and adjacent to the "coach Making Business" of John W. Ellis and Herbert B. Elder. In an odd sequence of

events, Caldwell ran into legal problems with the property in 1816, and its pending sale was announced to satisfy debts he owed to John Baird. Caldwell publicly cautioned against purchasing the land or the building at auction, promising he would satisfy his debts, but the sale apparently took place.

Between 1814 and 1816, Caldwell became involved in business activities other than cabinetmaking. For example, in December, 1816 he announced the dissolution of his partnership in the "Grocery Business" with Henry D. Pegram and assumed management of the operation, located at the junction of Cross and Old Streets. Again, business did not go well, and in 1817 a public sale of "all his stock and trade, consisting of a great variety of Groceries, Dry Goods, &c. &c." was announced.

Despite these setbacks, Caldwell represents one of the few cabinetmakers in this study who continued to produce furniture in Petersburg after 1820, by which time the importation of northern manufactures forced most other artisans to quit or leave town. In 1825 he announced the removal of his "Cabinet Ware-Room" to a large building "lower down Bank Street, a few doors above the corner of Sycamore, lately occupied by Mr. Rambaut's exchange." There he offered "New furniture, elegantly and substantially made," employed good workmen and materials, and declared that "any article will be made to order at short notice." In 1826 Caldwell joined the newly formed Benevolent Mechanics Association of Petersburg, a trade group organized in response to the town's increasing reliance on imported wares.

Petersburg Republican, April 9, 1810.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1812-1816, August 3, 1813.

Petersburg Republican, May 20, 1814.

Petersburg Republican, October 3, 1815.

Petersburg Republican, March 12, 19, and 22, 1816.

Petersburg Republican, December 20, 1816 .

Petersburg Republican, January 21 and 24, 1817.

Petersburg Republican, July 18, 1817.

The Intelligencer and Petersburg commercial Advertiser, November 25, 1825, 4-7.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1814-1820.

CLARKE, JOHN
Cabinetmaker?

(ca. 1810)

The only reference to Clarke is an inscription found on a mahogany sideboard with a secretary drawer (now privately owned by a Petersburg area resident). The scripted signature is scratched onto the underside of a small drawer in the desk section, and reads: "John Clarke his work, made and sold by him at his shop in Old Street, Petersburg." While not directly related to any other known Petersburg forms, the sideboard does reflect the type of "neat and plain" rococo design retained by many local makers after the Revolutionary War. Interestingly, the secretary section reflects an advanced level of cabinetmaking with well executed joinery and structural techniques. However the rest of the case is of a much cruder hand, possibly indicating that the secretary drawers and the case were made by different artisans.

Whether or not Clarke was a full-time cabinetmaker is not clear and no advertisements by him are known. In his study on The Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790 Wallace Gusler notes that in Richmond in 1776, a "John Clark" advertised an extensive cabinetmaking operation that included a complete shop description. Between 1803 and 1820 a number of residents named "John Clark" or "Clarke" appear in the Petersburg tax list. Because of the relatively common name, it is not possible to identify any of these people as the signer of the desk.

Wallace Gusler, The Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790, p. 164.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1802-1818.

CRAGES, ELIJAH (CRAGER) (1812)
Windsor Chairmaker

Prior to leaving the city to fight in the War of 1812, Petersburg Windsor chairmaker Joel Brown placed the following newspaper advertisement:

NOTICE

During my absence in the service of my country, I have employed Mr. Elijah Crages, late of Georgetown, District of Columbia, to carry on my Windsor Chair Manufactory. His knowledge in that line, and strict attention thereto, I have no doubt will give full satisfaction to those who favor him with their custom.

One of the later manifestations of this advertisement noted the name as "Crager." Brown returned to his business by early 1814, and no other references to Crages, either locally or elsewhere, are known (see Brown, Joel).

The Republican, Petersburg, August 28, 1812, 4-2.

The Republican, Petersburg, May 20, 1814, 4-3.

DEJERNATT, JOHN (Degarnet, Degarnett) (1807-post 1820)
Cabinetmaker

John DeJernatt's Old Street cabinetmaking shop was well established by 1806 when he thanked the public "for the encouragement he has received in the line of his profession, and informs, that he is now so situated as to be enabled to carry on the cabinet making business in the most extensive manner...He has the best workmen and materials that can be procured, and will execute orders to any amount, at the shortest notice." Curiously, DeJernatt does not appear in the local records again until 1813 when he insured "three

buildings on the South side of Old Street in the Town of Petersburg," located on lot 30. The buildings were described as a two story wooden "dwelling house" with adjoining sheds on either side, a large "cabinet shop and lumber house" with a stone first floor and a wood framed second floor, and a wood frame "Cabinet Ware room"--a considerable amount of personal property for a Petersburg furniture-maker at this time.

Over the next five years DeJernatt became involved in a variety of business ventures in addition to cabinetmaking. In 1815, for example, he insured two adjoining brick buildings situated on lot 7, on the north side of Old Street, one identified as JnO. Pollard's dwelling and "sadler's shop," and the other as a dwelling house and "currying shop" occupied by DeJernatt and "Brewer & Co." Each building was insured for the substantial sum of \$4000 and no mention is made of any cabinet business being conducted on the site. Later that year DeJernatt "resumed the business of a Cabinet Maker in the new Brick House on Old Street, fronting Petersburg warehouse," on part of lot 7. From this new location he announced for sale "the most fashionable and useful articles in the cabinet line." In 1815 DeJernatt not only paid \$120 rent for his "mansion" on lot 30 on Water Street, but also another \$20 in rent to William Boswell for the portion of lot 7 on Water Street. After 1816, however, he stopped being taxed for lot 30, an indication that he no longer owned the property and had moved his residence and business to part of lot 7. DeJernatt was assessed \$1000 for his portion of lot 7, an increase that reflected the new three story brick building. A survey of DeJernatt's tax records up to this time clearly indicates his progressive economic success. In 1815, for example, he had six black members in his household, possibly shop employees, and owned a riding chair, a gold watch, a wide variety of mahogany case furniture, and "gilt framed pictures."

By 1815 DeJernatt operated a "Cabinet Maker's Shop" in Richmond, near James Taylor's "Cabinet Shop and ware room," one of the few examples of a branch cabinetmaking operation in the Petersburg area. One year later DeJernatt apparently traded a part of lot 7 in return for Taylor's Richmond dwelling house and cabinet shop. (Tax records indicate that by 1817 Taylor was occupying his new portion of the brick building on lot 7, property later offered at a "public vendue" in 1818 to satisfy debts Taylor owed to "Pulliam & Swann." By 1819 Samuel Swann is recorded as renting this portion of lot 7. Swann is likely the son of the wealthy, Richmond-based cabinetmaker who in 1796 was involved another of Petersburg's branch cabinetmaking firms, called "Swann & Ellis" - see Ellis). By 1816, DeJernatt's portion of lot 7 in Petersburg included a "kitchen & lumber house" as well as a "plater's shop." It was adjacent to the "Cabinet Makers Shop & Ware Room" that John Raymond and John Ventus rented from Betsey Allergrue (see Ventus, John and Raymond, John). That year, DeJernatt gave notice of a runaway apprentice, an 18 year old named Edward Major.

Reflecting the increased specialization of Petersburg's furniture trades in the early nineteenth century, DeJernatt rented space to an upholsterer, William Neal, in 1816. Neal, a British citizen who had formerly worked in Boston, Baltimore, and Richmond, advertised his ability to upholster sofas, settees, and chairs. He provided "Draperys & Drawing-room CURTAINS AND CARPETS," as well as "paper-hanging" (See Neal, William). During this period Petersburg furniture-makers began to experience a considerable amount of competition from the importation of northern wares. That year, DeJernatt placed another advertisement that clearly indicates the mounting concern southern cabinetmakers had regarding the arrival of competitively priced Northern furniture:

THE subscriber, living at rather a remote part of the town, deems it necessary to inform the public, that he has now on hand, a large and elegant assortment of the most fashionable & useful CABINET FURNITURE. He solicits those disposed to give the best prices for the best work, to call and see his, before they apply to another market. As there are already specimens of northern furniture in this place, he has not the least doubt that his will merit a preference. Could the subscriber meet with sufficient encouragement, it would enable him to advance our own market, by giving the most approved workmen such prices as are given in New York and Philadelphia for the best work, having on hand, a large supply of excellent material to insure superior work, which cannot be expected without.

DeJernatt continued to practice in town and in 1818 insured his "Dwelling & Cabinet Makers Shop" on the corner of 13th and F Streets in Richmond for \$3,300. A notice he placed that year illustrates some of the specialty wood products imported by Virginia cabinetmakers during this period. He received "45,000 feet of the best quality island and bay MAHOGANY." This wood was initially prepared for shipment to the "British market" and was "consequently large, as none over 17 inches is allowed to American bottoms," apparently an indication that higher quality wood was reserved for shipment to Great Britain. DeJernatt's new stock included "a large proportion of crotch and shaded-wood; bed-posts turned and in the rough; about 5000 feet...cut for the use of builders, for stairways, inside doors, sashes, &c."

In the face of Petersburg's growing reliance on the importation of northern manufactures after 1815, DeJernatt's shop, like many other local businesses, encountered significant financial and legal difficulties. Indeed the economic patterns experienced by most Virginia port towns during this period reveal dramatic rises, subsequent crashes, and lingering depressions.

Numerous business leaders found themselves overextended during these hard times and subject to loan defaults, economic woes that reflected the damaging effects of America's protectionist trade policies of the early nineteenth century, as well as the increased availability of inexpensive imported wares from the North. In 1819, DeJernatt offered for sale his entire stock of furniture, described as "perhaps the most extensive in the state, amounting to upwards of \$5000 -- and for elegance, taste, and quality, not surpassed any where." Among the forms for sale were "side boards, with and without china presses, secretaries and book cases, bureaus, patent bedsteads, liquor cases, wash stands, dining tables, tea tables, card tables, cradles, candle stands, chairs, sofas, settees, work stands, writing desks &c. embracing a great variety of patterns, of the latest and most approved."

In 1822 he reinsured his property on lot 7. However by 1824 he was so deeply in debt to a variety of creditors that an indenture relinquishing all of his personal property was entered into the Petersburg Hustings Court records. Listed as the possessions of "John and Christopher DeJernatt, cabinetmakers," the property included the estate of their deceased father, Christopher DeJernatt of Rowan County, North Carolina, as well as all of his "personal estate." Curiously, no other references to a partnership between John and Christopher, Jr. are known. The latter does not appear in the pre-1820 tax lists. The complete description of the contents of John DeJernatt's shop in this document reveals that he owned an impressive array of household accessories.

DeJernatt remained in the city at least until 1827, when he sold off the remainder of lot 7 and moved to Manchester, near Richmond. His business ventures in that town are not known. Interestingly, the reconstructed rostrum of Blandford Church, built in the early twentieth century, was made

by John DeJarnatt, almost certainly a descendant of the early furniture-maker.

The Republican, Petersburg, April 23, 1807, 1-4.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 68, November 22, 1813, p.1216.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 52, August, 1815, p. 485.
The Republican, October 3, 1815, 4-4.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 73, September 9, 1815.
Petersburg Hustings Deeds, No. 10, 1815-1816, February 5, 1816, pp. 612-614.
Petersburg Hustings Deeds, No. 11, 1816, January 30, 1816, pp. 21-24.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 53, March 9, 1816, p. 573
Petersburg Republican, November 22, 1816, 3-6
Mercantile Advertiser, Petersburg, February 17, 1817, 3-1.
Petersburg Republican, August 14, 1817, 3-3
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 73, November 29, 1817, p.2456
Petersburg Republican, March 6, 1818, 2-5
Petersburg Republican, May 8, 1818, 3-5
Petersburg Republican, June 15, 1819
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1807-1820.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1808-1820.

DILLWORTH, GEORGE (1806-1818)
Windsor Chairmaking Partner, Wheat Fan Maker, Wire worker

In 1806 George Dillworth and John Priest announced their intent to "carry on the following business, near Rambaut, Gernon, & Co's Store, on Old street,--viz. Wheat Fan making, Wire-work, of all kinds, Windsor Chairs, Settees, Riding Chair Bodies, &c. &c.--They likewise make Japan and Copal Varnish." However, their ambitious undertaking was short lived, and by 1808 Priest was in Nashville, Tennessee operating a "Windsor Chair Manufactory" (see Priest, John).

Dillworth remained in Petersburg, but no further references to his involvement in Windsor chairmaking are known, strongly suggesting that the unsuccessful firm of Dillworth & Priest represented the union of artisans who practiced two distinct trades. Evidence indicates that Priest made the

furniture, a theory supported by his continuation in that line of work, while Dillworth produced the wheat fans and wire work. By 1812 Dillworth operated a shop opposite the Petersburg Mills where he offered "WHEAT FANS of every description." Five years later "George Dilworth" advertised that he "intends cont'nuing the WHEAT FAN MAKING and WIRE WEAVING Business at his old stand on Old street, nearly opposite the store of G. & P.H. Wills....Gentlemen who want wire for Rolling Screens, shall have them completed at a short notice." Dillworth also wholesaled fans to other merchants. For example, Roger Mallory's advertisement that he "has for sale, and will keep a constant supply of WHEAT FANS, made by Mr. Geo. Dillworth, who is well known in this place as a master workman" (see Mallory, Roger). By 1817 Dillworth was producing "wheat fans and wove wire" for retail merchant J.L. Clapdore, who noted that the products were "well known, and approved of in this place."

Although Dillworth appears to have had a long career, he was in poor financial standing by 1818 when his son Janius was apprenticed to a local carpenter, Charles C. Birch, by the Overseers of the Poor. Local tax records similarly indicate that Dillworth was never a prosperous artisan. Interestingly, during George Dillworth's tenure in Petersburg, his brother Samuel was working in the city as a printer, bookbinder and stationer. Samuel lost the shop he partnered with M.W. Dunnavant in the massive 1815 Petersburg fire.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, July 11, 1806.

Petersburg Republican, February 27, 1812.

Petersburg Republican, May 7, 1812.

Petersburg Daily Courier, June 22, 1815.

Norfolk Gazette and Public Ledger, July 25, 1815.

Petersburg Republican, February 7, 1817.

Petersburg Republican, July 1, 1817.

Petersburg Republican, July 4, 1817.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, August 20, 1818.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1806-1820.

ELLIS, ? (SWANN & ELLIS)
Cabinetmaker

(1795-1797)

In 1795, Ellis--whose first name remains a mystery, though he may be John W. Ellis, a longtime Petersburg coach and riding chair maker--entered into a Petersburg cabinetmaking partnership with Samuel Swann of Richmond. Swann apparently was the controlling partner and he remained in Richmond, while Ellis managed the Bollingbrook Street shop. In fact, Swann simultaneously oversaw another cabinetmaking shop in Richmond, managed by his son-in-law, George Taylor. Unfortunately, little is known about Ellis's specific role in the Petersburg shop, and an understanding of his cabinetmaking career is best achieved by examining Swann's career.

In 1791 Samuel Swann announced a "CABINET and CHAIR MAKING BUSINESS, at his shop on the cross street leading to Shockoe-Hill." He also offered "FUNERALS furnished on the shortest notice." Evidence indicates that this was a considerable operation. In 1792, for example, Swann advertised that he had "some of the best workmen employed in his service," as well as "All kinds of CURTAINS made with the utmost expedition." He was involved in a variety of business ventures as well. In 1793, for example, he and his wife Elizabeth purchased additional property in Richmond. Along with his brother John, Swann owned interest in the "black hearth Coal pits situated in the County of Chesterfield." They sold the coal by the bushel, advertising as far away as Knoxville, though by 1794 John had assumed sole ownership of the operation.

In 1796 Swann announced that he intended to leave Richmond for a few months. In his absence George Taylor was charged with running the Richmond cabinetmaking shop, a large operation situated in a "three story

extended brick and wood building." The announcement also noted that "Mr. Ellis" would manage the Petersburg cabinetmaking shop, a firm that had first advertised in October 1795:

SWAN & ELLIS

RESPECTFULLY inform the public that they have just opened shop on Bollingbrook Street nearly opposite the Post-Office, where they intend making all kinds of Cabinet work: such as Easy Chairs, Chairs, Sofas, Secretary and Bookcases, Desk and Bookcases, circular, square, and oval pembroke, Card and Dining Tables, circular and commode sideboards with celarates, circular, square and commode Beaurous, and many other articles too tedious to mention; which they warrant, shall be made as elegant and on as cheap terms as can be imported from any foreign market.

In October 1796 the partners advertised for "Three or Four JOURNEYMEN that is well accomplished in the Cabinet Business," an indication that they ran a relatively large operation. Located "nearly opposite Cedar-Point Warehouse," the shop site was offered for sale in April 1797, though it is unclear whether the operation ever moved. Later that year Swann & Ellis reiterated to the public "that they have in their employ a professen [professed] UPHOLSTERER-- which will enable them in the future to execute all orders in that line with neatness and dispatch." In 1797, the only year the business is recorded in the Petersburg tax books, the partnership was assessed for five adult white males, and three adult black males.

Swann's business interests in Richmond continued during this period. In 1797 the Windsor chairmaking partnership of Pointer & Childress commenced business on Shockoe Hill in the lower part of the building he owned. Swann died in Powhatan County in 1799, leaving behind a large amount of "Curtain Callico...hanging paper....bordering (ditto)," as well as

other bed furniture. In his will, dated October 11, 1795, he bequeathed the entire Richmond cabinetmaking operation, including the apprentices, to Taylor. However, no references to either Ellis or the Petersburg operation were made, suggesting that by this time, the shop was no longer in operation. Furthermore, no additional Petersburg references to a cabinetmaker named Ellis are known.

Common Council Records, No. 1, 1782-1793, City of Richmond, 1788, p. 411.
The Virginia Gazette and Public Advertiser, Richmond, June 18, 1791, 4-4.
The Virginia Gazette and Public Advertiser, Richmond, January 5, 1793, 4-1.
The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser Extraordinary, Richmond, March 26, 1794, 1-1.
The Virginia Gazette & Richmond & Manchester Advertiser, Richmond, March 5, 1795, 3-1.
Will Book No. 2, 1787-1802, Henrico Co., October 11, 1795, pp. 490-491.
Virginia Gazette, Petersburg, November 3, 1795, 2-3.
Deed Book No. 5, 1796-1800, Henrico Co., February 16, 1796, pp. 87-90.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 12, February 17, 1796, p. 33.
The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser, Richmond, June 1, 1796, 4-3.
Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer, October 21, 1796, 2-3.
The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser, Richmond, January 11, 1797, 3-4.
Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer, April 21, 1797, 3-3.
Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer, October 13, 1797, 2-4.
Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser, Richmond, October 11, 1799, 3-5.
Will Book No. 2, 1787-1802, Henrico County, April 5, 1802, p. 627.
Will Book No. 5, 1816-1822, Henrico County, April 7, 1818, p. 350.
Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1797

FAUX, JOSEPH (See POWELL, RICHARD)

FENNER, THOMAS and HENRY LEIPER (1801-1805)
Cabinetmakers

In 1795 Thomas Fenner of Petersburg was taxed for one adult white male and the next known reference to him is an 1802 dissolution notice of his partnership with Henry Leiper, who apparently was from Philadelphia and in

fact appeared in that city's Directory in 1798. Leiper first appears in the Petersburg tax lists in 1801. Fenner and Leiper's announcement added that they "have on hand some ready made furniture, which will be sold uncommonly low for cash." Shortly before this was published, Fenner advertised the sale of "A good Feather Bed, a Milch Cow, a Chest of Drawers, and a Dining Table," suggesting his intent to leave Petersburg. After 1802 he does not appear in the city tax records. Interestingly, it appears that after leaving Petersburg, Fenner embarked on a different career altogether. In January 1811 "Thomas Fenner," most likely the same person, is recorded in the Greenville County records, renewing his licence to keep an ordinary.

Leiper may well have carried on the Petersburg cabinetmaking operation. He remains in the city tax lists through 1805 when he is assessed for two adult white males. In September of that year Leiper announced his intention to leave the state, offering to sell "all his Mahogany Furniture on hand, some feather beds, also a parcel of Mahogany Boards, Work Benches, &c. &c.." Articles not sold by private sale were to be auctioned off at the end of the month at his house, "opposite Mr. Durell's Tavern." No further references to his activities in Petersburg are known.

The Republican, & Petersburg Advertiser, December 21, 1802, 3-5.

Philadelphia Directory, 1798, Cornelious Stafford.

The Petersburg Republican, December 30, 1802, 3-3.

The Republican, Petersburg, September 27, 1805, 1-1

Petersburg Order Book No. 5, 1810-1815, January 11, 1811, p. 75.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1795-1805.

FORE, WILLIAM
Cabinetmaker

(1806-1807)

William Fore first appears in the local tax records in 1801. His assessment for 56¢ for a black adult male and a horse suggests that he did not possess much taxable personal property at the time. In November 1806 Fore and William Robertson, natives of Scotland, announced the opening of their extensive cabinetmaking operation:

FORE & ROBERTSON,
 BEG leave to inform their friends, the public
 in general, that they have commenced the
 Cabinet Business,
 At the lower end of Bollingbrook street,
 opposite Doctor Bott's, where they have on
 hand a large and general assortment of
 Furniture, of the newest fashions; consisting
 of side-boards and bureaus, card, dining, and
 pembroke tables, secretaries and book cases,
 candle and wash stands, &c. &c.
 All of which will be sold at the most reduced
 prices for Cash.

Like so many other Petersburg furniture-making partnerships, theirs was short lived and was dissolved in February 1807. Robertson was authorized "to receive payments and grant discharges" and carry on the "cabinet business in all its various branches, in the house lately occupied by Fore & Robertson" (see Robertson, William).

Fore was taxed in "Petersburg City" through 1804. The next year he was assessed in the "Prince George" section of the Petersburg Tax Books, an indication that he was living in the Blandford area. He continued to be taxed for one adult white male in this part of town until 1809, when he returned to the "City" section. Between 1810 and 1812 Fore was again listed in Blandford. His cumulative tax records indicate that he never attained much wealth.

Furthermore, his involvement in furniture-making after the dissolution of Fore & Robertson is not documented, suggesting that he may have turned to another trade or business venture.

The Richmond and Manchester Advertiser, Richmond, August 31, 1796, 4-2.
The Republican, Petersburg, November 17, 1806, 4-3.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, unp., March 3, 1806.
The Republican, Petersburg, February 5, 1807, 4-1.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1801-1812

GRIMES, GEORGE W. (1814)
Windsor Chairmaker, Coach and Sign Painter

In 1800, "George W. Grymes" was apprenticed to Ephraim Evans, a Windsor chairmaker in Alexandria, Virginia. By 1812, Grimes was in Petersburg and joined the local Volunteers to fight the British. In 1814 he returned military duty and announced the opening of his new business, located nearly opposite the Farmer's Bank on Bollingbrook Street. He called himself a "Coach & Sign Painter," but added that he intended to keep "constantly on hand, a handsome assortment of Fancy and Windsor CHAIRS," as well as sell prints and execute "MILITARY COLORS AND GILDING" ("military colors" probably refers to the decoration of painted flags). Following the lead of numerous early nineteenth century Petersburg artisans who were not able to compete with the increasing importation of northern wares, Grimes left town. He settled in Raleigh, North Carolina where he advertised in 1815:

WINDSOR CHAIRS.- George W. Grimes respectfully informs the citizens of Raleigh, that he has taken the house on Hillsborough street. opposite to Mr. Wm Boylan's, where he intends carrying on the Windsor Chair making, in all its various branches. He will also, carry on the Sign and Military Colour painting, in the neatest and most elegant manner. The Chairs will be made to any

fashion, and finished in a stile of elegance interior to none in the Union. Orders from the country will be thankfully received and dispatched with celerity.

Raleigh, June 2, 1815

An apprentice to the above business, of good family and about 14 or 15 years of age will be taken.

However, Grimes had a short-lived Windsor chairmaking career. In December 1815 a local coachmaker named Thomas Cobbs announced that he had "purchased the entire stock of Windsor Chair materials of George W. Grimes, and intends on carrying on the Windsor Chair making business extensively." Cobbs added that he would continue his "Coach making business" as well (By 1816 Joel Brown, another transplanted Petersburg Windsor chairmaker, was operating a "Windsor Chair Manufactory" out of the Raleigh house formerly occupied by Cobbs - see Brown, Joel). After the sale of the Windsor operation, Grimes placed an advertisement relating to his newest business venture. In April 1816 he announced that "GEORGE W. GRIMES, having sold to Mr. Thomas Cobbs, his stock in the Windsor Chair business, intends devoting his attention exclusively to PAINTING AND GILDING" and that "He will attend particularly to the Coach and Sign Painting, and House ornamenting." Although Grimes's emphasized his "assiduity" and "attention to business," another advertisement in the same newspaper began "Look here, THE citizens of Raleigh and its vicinity, will be cautious of George W. Grimes, who for some time has resided in this city;" the complaint went on to describe Grimes's delinquent payment for the purchase of some beef.

By May 1816 Grimes was in a "house lately occupied by Mr. Joel Lane," where he offered a variety of goods for local artisans, including "A QUANTITY of the best Japan Varnish, for Coach and Sign Painting, &c." On June 11, 1816,

a "DISTRESSING FIRE AT RALEIGH, (N.C.)," was described in the American Beacon and Commercial Diary, a Norfolk, Virginia newspaper. Apparently an "incendiary" set fire to a store-house on Fayetteville Street, a blaze that soon spread to other buildings. Among the houses destroyed was a "store-house" owned by a Mr. Brickle at that time "occupied by Mr. G.W. Grimes, Painter." This was an ironic fate for Grimes considering that he was fortunate enough to have left Petersburg only months prior to the terrible July, 1815 fire that destroyed all of Bollingbrook Street including his former shop. It is not clear whether Grimes recovered from this event, as no further references to his activities are known.

Petersburg Intelligencer, July 8, 1814, 1-1.

The Raleigh Minerva, North Carolina, June 23, 1815.

The Raleigh Minerva, North Carolina, December 22, 1815.

The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, April 12, 1816, 3-4.

The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, April 26, 1816, 4-2.

The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, May 17, 1816, 3-1, 3-4.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary, Norfolk, Va., June 20, 1816, 3-2.

I'ANSON, MACHIE D.
MARKS, LEWIS L.
STITH, EZRA
Cabinetmakers

(1811-1818)

In August, 1815 Machie D. I'Anson, Lewis L. Marks and Ezra Stith advertised the opening of their "Cabinet Making Business" located in a house at the "lower end of Bollingbrook Street, next door above Mr. JOHNSTON'S Stemmerly," a tobacco processing warehouse. The partners informed the public that they would carry on "the above business, in all its several branches." Little is known of their individual activities in Petersburg prior to this venture. Stith is the first to appear in the local records, taxed in the

"Prince George" or Blandford section of the city in 1811. I'Anson was taxed in the city in 1815, and Marks in 1819, when he is noted as living in Ward "W."

By 1816, the partners had moved their shop to a lot owned by Robert Bolling and located on the north side of "Bolling Brook Street." An insurance appraisal indicates that the three craftsmen occupied the only building on the site, a "Cabinet makers Shop" described as a 40' x 20' one-story wood frame building and appraised at \$400. By 1818 the three artisans again moved their "Cabinet Business," this time to a site "a few doors above French's Tavern" on Old Street, possibly into the shop previously occupied by the Windsor chairmaking partnership of Alexander Brown and Graves Matthews (see Brown, Alexander and Matthews, Graves). The trio's sole newspaper advertisement from this location noted that they "have recently purchased a parcel of the best St. Domingo Mahogany--and intend to manufacture and keep on hand a good assortment of Cabinet Furniture, which they will dispose of on the most reasonable and satisfactory terms; their friends and others are invited to call."

While it is known that I'Anson was an active member in Blandford's Masonic Lodge #3, no further furniture-making references to any of the three artisans have been found.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, September 22, 1815, 4-1.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 53, January 29, 1816, p. 538.
Intelligencer, & Petersburg Commercial Advertiser, March 24, 1818, 4-5.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1811-1819.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1811.

LAYSSARD, LEWIS (LAYSSART, LEYSARD, LAYSART) (1814-1819)
Cabinetmaker, Looking Glass Maker, Blacksmith

Aside from his dubious distinction of being the Petersburg furniture-maker with the most frequently misspelled name, Lewis Layssard represents one of the more diversely skilled artisans in this study. Beginning in 1814 he embarked on a wide variety of trades and business ventures that took him from Virginia to North Carolina. In December of that year, Layssard and his partner John Lorrain announced the opening of their shop "in a house on High-Street, nearly opposite to Mr. Bowden's" where they offered a variety of services that included the making and repairing of "LOOKING-GLASSES of all descriptions, sizes and qualities." The advertisement further noted that "They will hereafter keep constantly on hand, a good assortment of Dressing -glasses, in stained mahogany and gilt frames." Like so many other Petersburg partnerships, theirs was short-lived. Lorrain went on to work in Petersburg as a portraitist and floorcloth painter (see Lorrain, John).

By February 1815 "Layssart" announced that he had just received for sale a "Piano-forte," although whether this represents a usual business venture for him is not clear. Four months later, "Laysart" apparently changed occupations and was "carrying on in all its various Branches, the BLACK-SMITH's BUSINESS," as well as "Horse-Shoeing and all kinds of Farm work--Waggon--Dray and Cart-Ironing" and "HORSE FARRING, &C." By December 1817 "Lewis Leysard" and his wife Elizabeth had moved to Louisburg, North Carolina where he commenced a "CABINET AND CHAIR MAKING BUSINESS." In this capacity, Layssard had "on hand and excellent assortment of Mahogany, & engaged hands from Petersburg and New York," vowing that he "can supply

his friends with all kinds of furniture, as good as any of the Northern Towns, and on reasonable terms." Curiously, "Lewis Layssard" is listed in the 1819 Petersburg City Personal property tax records as living in Ward "C" and taxed for 1 adult white male. It is possible that Layssard briefly returned to town or that this may be his son or some other relative.

John Bivins' research on Layssard further illustrates his status as a jack-of-all-trades. By 1825 Layssard had again relocated, this time to Halifax, North Carolina where he "invented a new and useful Machine for the purpose of Packing Cotton into square bales." Just one year later he moved further south to Tarboro, North Carolina, where he returned to cabinetmaking. There Layssard "erected a complete workshop" that was producing "Sideboards, China Presses, secretaries, bookcases, bureaus, tables, wash-stands, candle-stands, gentlemen's and ladies wardrobes, ladies' and gentlemen's cabinets, cylinder-fall desks, portable and common do. and bedsteads of all descriptions." His prolific services also included the "turning business," working in "wood, iron, brass, ivory, &c.," and providing carpenters with "columns, newel posts, ballosters, drops, corner blocks, rosettes, &c." In spite of these vast offerings, Layssard's business encountered financial difficulties. He was soon in debt and forced to sell off two lots in the town of Halifax, as well as "one turning lathe, turning tools & apparatus & cabinetmakers work benches, 2 grindstones with their fixtures, all working tools, stock of timber of all sorts 2 horses 2 gigs double & single 1 set gig hamers, saddle & bridle all the household & kitchen furniture work on hand finished and unfinished 1 cow & 2 calves together with all his property"--in other words, most everything he owned.

Layssard's wife Elizabeth died sometime prior to January 1831 when her estate was inventoried. Later that year Layssard advertised for two or three negro apprentices to the "carpenters trade" and several months later, the

estate of James Haliday owed Layssard \$35.00 for the making of a coffin. He apparently remained solvent for at least the next several years, as he is noted as purchasing goods at a number of Halifax County estate sales, however no references to his trade activity are known.

John Bivins, The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820, p. 480.
The Petersburg Intelligencer, December 23, 1814, 3-5.
Petersburg Daily Courier, February 4, 1815, 3-3.
The Petersburg Daily Courier, June 22, 1815, 4-3.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 5, 1815, 4-3.
Deed Book 13, 1815-1817, Norfolk City, Virginia, May, 1816, p. 500.
The Star, and North Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, December 26, 1817.
Warrenton Reporter, October 7, 1825.
Free Press, Tarboro, N.C., November 28, 1826.
Halifax County Record of Deeds, Book 27, February 8, 1827.
Record of Estates, 1828-1835, Halifax County, N.C., January 6 1830, p.248;
 February, 1830, p. 151; January 25, 1831, p. 262; August, 1831, p. 251; December 6, 1831, p. 280; December, 1830, p. 388.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1819

LEIPER, HENRY (see FENNER, THOMAS)

LORRAIN, JOHN R. (1814-1819)
Looking Glass Maker, Portraitist, Floor Cloth Painter

John Lorrain and Lewis Layssard opened a shop on High Street in Petersburg in December 1814 where they made and repaired looking glasses (see Layssard, Lewis). Though the partnership was short-lived, both artisans remained in the city and became involved in new careers. Within a year Layssard was working as a blacksmith, and by September, 1816 Lorrain was advertising his services as a professional portraitist:

J. R. Lorrain, Portrait Painter

INFORMS the Ladies and Gentlemen of
 Petersburg, that he has taken a room in Mr.
 John Baird's house situated between Bank and

Old Streets and immediately behind Sycamore where he will attend to his profession.

Those who wish to have their portraits painted are requested to come in the forenoon--visitors are invited to call in the afternoon.

In November 1816 Lorrain offered his painting services to the citizens of Raleigh, North Carolina, who were invited to "inspect Specimens of his Art" at the Raleigh Library. Apparently this was a temporary business visit because Lorrain returned to Petersburg a short time later. In August 1817 he announced that he was living on the outskirts of Petersburg where he offered an expanded repertoire of painting services, including "PORTRAIT PAINTING...MILITARY COLORS, MASONIC FLOOR CLOTHS and APRONS, and LANDSCAPE PAINTING."

Lorrain was killed in November 1819. The Petersburg Republican reported "We understand that Mr. John Lorrain, a respectable youth of our town, promising in talents, and respectable in society, was lately killed in a duel at New Orleans...We lament that he did not meet a better fate."

The Petersburg Intelligencer, December 23, 1814, 3-5.
Petersburg Daily Courier, June 22, 1815, 4-3.
The Petersburg Intelligencer, September 17, 1816, 4-4.
Raleigh Register, North Carolina, November 1, 1816.
American Star, Petersburg, August 23, 1817.
Petersburg Republican, November 26, 1819, 3-3.

McCLOUD, JOHN (MCLEOD)
Cabinetmaker

(1787-1795)

Listed in the 1773 Norfolk County Order Book is an order that the Church wardens of Elizabeth River Parish "bind John McCloud to John Seldon according to law" (see Seldon, John). Seldon, a Norfolk trained cabinetmaker, worked there for nearly twenty years before losing his shop when the city

was burned in January, 1776, at the start of the Revolutionary War. After the fire, he relocated to Blandford and resumed the cabinetmaking business. It is not clear whether Selden brought McCloud with him, but beginning in 1787 the former apprentice, living in Blandford, appears in the local tax records. That year he was assessed for two black servants above the age of sixteen and one below. In 1789 David Coleman, "a free mulatto Boy" was apprenticed to McCloud "to learn the Trade of Cabinetmaker."

Little is known about McCloud's furniture-making career in the Petersburg area. Like many other local furniture-makers, he also made coffins. In the late 1780s, for example, he charged the local court 24 shillings for the coffin of Mrs. Choppin, a poor citizen of Petersburg. Apparently McCloud's work brought him a modest degree of wealth for he owned both land and slaves. In 1791 he and his wife Isabella, a native of Norfolk, deeded a lot in that city to Patrick Parker for £100. Records from the Bristol Parish Church in Blandford indicate that in 1790 "Aggy," a slave belonging to McCloud, gave birth to a daughter named Louisa" and that three years later John and Isabella had a son named John S. McCloud. In 1790 he paid tax on his Blandford "mansion," indicated in subsequent tax lists as lot 17. This property was adjacent to that of another local cabinetmaker, Alexander Taylor (see Taylor, Alexander).

McCloud entered his will at the Hustings Court on January 14, 1795, and it was proved that June. Listed were a variety of case and seating furniture, looking and dressing glasses, tables, an "eight day clock" valued at over £7, a "Japaned Sugar box with no lid," and a "liquor case & bottles," and some of these items may have been by his own hand (see appendix A). McCloud bequeathed Isabella the house and lot in Blandford, property that was to pass, in order, to son John, daughter Sarah, and son Andrew Hamilton. Isabella was

given use of the "shop," as well as "the Negro woman [B]etty." Sarah received a pair of silver sugar tongs, six silver tea spoons, and an eight day clock.

Andrew got a silver ladle marked "DR," a pair of silver sugar tongs marked "D^CE," six silver tea spoons, and six silver table spoons, as well as two large looking glasses in mahogany frames. McCloud left his eldest son John "my Bible and Prayer Book." The document concluded "My Will and desire is that all my Shop Tools, Stock of Timber and materials for my business, with what furniture may be on hand in my Shop, may be Sold for the best price, and the moneys arising therefrom, after my Funeral expenses and just debts are paid, shall remain at the disposal of my Wife for the purpose of Educating our children in the fear of the Lord, which God Grant."

The executors of McCloud's estate, Ebenezer Scott and William Gray, offered his shop materials for sale, including "a variety of Tools, some Furniture, with Mahogany, Walnut, and other materials used in the Cabinet-makers business." In 1798 McCloud's estate was taxed not only \$60 for the lot 17 residence, but also \$7 for lot 89 in Blandford and taxes continued to be paid by the estate through 1820.

Norfolk County Order Book, 1773, March 19, 1773, p. 163a.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book 1, 1784-1791, August 6, 1789, p. 286.

Deed Book 2, 1791-1793, Norfolk City, Va., August 10, 1791, p. 39.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, January 14, 1795, p. 231-232.

Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, June 30, 1795, 3-3.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, January 29, 1800, p. 295.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, September 1, 1800.

The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish Virginia, 1720-1789,

(Richmond:William Ellis Jones, 1898), p. 343-344.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1789-1820

Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1820

McCORMICK, JAMES (M'CORMICK)
Cabinetmaker

(1791)

In February 1786 McCormick first advertised his cabinetmaking services in Baltimore, Maryland. Apparently a native of Ireland, he had "for some Years past worked in the first Shops in Dublin." By May 1786 McCormick moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where he offered mahogany and walnut "cabinet and chair work in the newest and neatest manner" and again recalled his "long experience in some of the first shops in England and Ireland."

By November 1787 McCormick relocated to Norfolk, Virginia. There, in the former "Printing-office, and next door to the present," he offered a complete line of goods in the "Cabinet and Chair-making Business" worked in the "neatest manner." He also had on hand "some Ready made Furniture of the newest taste." Like other Virginia cabinetmakers, McCormick also made coffins. Additionally, he offered "Funerals supplied on the shortest notice." Little else is known of his cabinetmaking work in Norfolk.

Sometime after 1787, McCormick moved his business once more, upriver to Petersburg. Unfortunately, little is known of his time there. He died in June 1791 and public sale of his estate, administered by his wife Susanna, included "a quantity of mahogany, oak, pine, and poplar PLANK, mahogany SCANTLING; twelve very handsome mahogany CHAIRS, nearly finished; a chest of Cabinet-maker's tools, a WORK-BENCH, and a mahogany desk."

In August 1793 the overseers for the poor in Alexandria bound "James McCormack" at the age of fourteen as "apprentice to Joseph Ingle who is to learn him the trade of a cabinetmaker." In his study of early Norfolk cabinetmaking traditions Ronald L. Hurst surmises that this may well be the son of James McCormick.

Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser, February 21, 1786, 1-1; April 7, 1786, 3-2.
Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser, May 11, 1786, 3-2.
Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal, November 21, 1787, 4-4.
Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, June 23, 1791, 3-2.
Hustings Court Order Book, No. 28, Borough of Alexandria, August, 1793, p.146.
 Ronald L. Hurst, Norfolk, pp. 123-125.

McFARQUHAR, JOHN (M'FARQUHAR) (1788-1794)
Coffinmaker, Cabinetmaker?, Carpenter?

John McFarquhar remains an enigmatic figure among the artisans included in this study. Outstanding evidence clearly indicates his work as a coffinmaker, and strongly suggests his additional services as a carpenter and cabinetmaker. In March 1788 McFarquhar was mentioned in a lawsuit as having in his possession certain tools belonging to Thomas Wilton, the plaintiff in the case. These objects, to be sold by the court, included planes, saws, "brase and bitts," a brush, a dictionary, a hone, and one chest; the outcome of the case is not known. Such tools were commonly used by a wide variety of woodworkers and tell us little about McFarquhar's specific trade. Indeed, the only references to his work in Petersburg's early court records cite his production of relatively inexpensive coffins for the poor.

In 1789 Bennett Aldridge, the orphaned son of Peter Aldridge, was apprenticed to McFarquhar. Unfortunately, no mention is made of the particular trade he was to learn. That year McFarquhar appears in the city tax lists, paying for one adult black male and 1 horse. Beginning in 1789, McFarquhar is noted in "Orders Entered Concerning the Poor in the town of Petersburg" as the supplier of six inexpensive coffins for which he received between 16 and 18 shillings each. During this period he was also involved in a number of legal actions in Petersburg.

Documentary evidence suggests that McFarquhar was never wealthy. For example, the 1788 land tax records indicate that he was not a property owner, but the renter a lot from Mary Bolling. By the 1780s, she was the wealthiest landholder in Petersburg, leasing dozens of downtown properties and many more in Blandford. Interestingly, between 1788 and 1793 McFarquhar rented properties from four different owners, though the specific sites are not noted. He died in 1794, and the property where he resided was ordered by the court to be rented out "for the best price that can be had." Among those appointed to appraise his estate was local cabinetmaker William Stainback (see Stainback, William). McFarquhar's personal property included two cupboards (one unfinished), a "lot of old locks hinges &c.," two drawers, one "Shew Glass frame," five sashes, 154 feet of plank, two door frames, one "chest & tools," two workbenches and "screws," an inkstand and canister, seven pairs of bed hinges, one bedstead and a glue pot. A number of these items suggest his work as a house carpenter and furniture-maker.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book 1, 1784-1791, March 5, 1788, p. 221; February 4, 1789, p. 259; August 6, 1789, p. 286; August 6, 1789, p. 287; September 3, 1789, p. 293.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book 2, 1791-1797, June 3, 1793, p. 81; May 7, 1794, p. 122.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, unp., September 1, 1800.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1789-1793.

Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1793.

McKEEN, ROBERT
Windsor Chairmaker

(1793-1796)

By 1793, Robert McKeen's Windsor chairmaking business in Dinwiddie County was apparently well-established. That year he advertised in a Petersburg newspaper:

WINDSOR CHAIRS AND SETTEES

THE Subscriber begs leave to inform the public and his friends, that he carries on the business of WINDSOR CHAIR making, in its various branches, at Dinwiddie Court-house, and flatters himself that he can supply any person who may incline to favor him with their custom, in that line, with those articles, as cheap as they can be got elsewhere, and warranted -- He returns his unfeigned thanks to his respective customers for past favors, and hopes to merit that encouragement in future, which he has so liberally experienced since his commencement of business in Virginia.

Because his shop was at least twelve miles from Petersburg, he made an arrangement by which "Any person may be supplied with the above articles, by applying to Mr. Francis Brown," a coachmaker on Old Street in the city. McKeen also asked for the application of an apprentice to learn the business of Windsor chairmaking. Importantly, McKeen represents Petersburg's first documented artisan specializing in the production of Windsor seating furniture.

Perhaps because of the larger clientele, McKeen moved his operation to Petersburg in 1795. That year he is taxed for one black adult male, a horse, and two-fifths occupation of lot 28 on High Street. In 1796 McKeen insured the buildings on this site, specifically a one-story wooden dwelling house valued at \$700 and a two-story "wooden chair makers shop" valued at \$400. He last appears in the city tax lists in 1800. No subsequent references to his Windsor chairmaking activities in Petersburg are known. By 1801 McKeen was living in Warrenton, North Carolina and apparently no longer was involved in the Windsor trade. Instead he announced the opening of a "House of Entertainment....AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE, Where travellers can be accommodated in the best manner, having good forage and attentive hostlers."

Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, Petersburg, September 6, 1793, 1-1.

The Virginia Gazette and Richmond Chronicle, Richmond, July 1, 1794, 1-3.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 10, May 11, 1796, p. 16.

The Republican, August 3, 1801, 3-4.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1795-1800.

Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1795.

MALLORY, ROGER (1803?-1818)
Coffinmaker, Cabinetmaker?, Warehouse?

In February 1803 a Petersburg resident named Roger Mallory was involved in a legal dispute in Petersburg and in 1815 a person with the same name was listed as a member of Blandford Masonic Lodge No. 3. It is not clear if these references are to the same person who advertised in the Petersburg Intelligencer in January 1818:

ROGER MALLORY
HAS ON HAND--
....A NICE PARCEL
CABINET FURNITURE
 Consisting of Sideboards, Bureaus, Writing
 Desks, Tables, & c. for sale on very
 accommodating terms.

It is interesting that no mention is made of Mallory's actually producing this furniture. The term "parcel" may well indicate that these were ready made wares purchased by him for resale. Furthermore, available documentary evidence does not indicate whether he ran a cabinetmaking shop, a cabinet wareroom, or a retail shop that also sold furniture. The latter is suggested by an 1817 advertisement which simply noted that "ROGER MALLORY has for sale, and will keep a constant supply of WHEAT FANS, made by Mr. George Dillworth, who is well known in this place as a master workman" (see Dillworth, George). Several days after this notice was placed, J.L. Clapdore, a retail merchant who

also sold Dillworth's wares, reminded the public that order could be "left with Roger Mallory in Petersburg."

Mallory first appears in the Petersburg tax records in 1814. The extensive 1815 tax lists reveal that in addition to four slaves, he owned two horses, a carriage, cattle, a silver watch, and a mahogany chest of drawers, dining table, and three card tables. He also owned a Windsor settee or "sopha," and paid a \$30 retail tax for his business. By 1816 Mallory lived in Ward "W" in the city. His apparent prosperity is annually reflected in the tax records through 1820.

The Spottsylvania County Will Books for 1821 note that three dollars was taken from the estate of Susanna Cason, and paid to "R. Mallory for coffin." It is possible that this is the same artisan, although it is not known where Mallory was living at the time.

Petersburg Republican, July 1, 1817, 3-1.

Petersburg Republican, July 4, 1817, 3-6.

Petersburg Intelligencer, January 9, 1818, 1-4.

Will Book K, 1820-1824, Spottsylvania County, Va., August 6, 1821, p. 110.

William Moseley Brown, Blandford Lodge No. 3 A.F. & A. M. - A Bicentennial History, (Petersburg: Plummer Printing Co., 1957), p. 43.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1814-1820

MASON, GEORGE

(1806-1813)

Cabinetmaker, Upholsterer

MASON, MARY C.

(1813-past 1820)

Cabinetmaking Shop Proprietress

Petersburg's Mason and Russell family represents a prolific and important part of the town's early furniture-making history. The relevant lineage begins with Jonathan Russell, who was a local chairmaker (see

Russell, Jonathan). His daughter, Mary C. Russell, married George Mason, a successful cabinetmaker who left behind one of the most complete and informative inventories for a furniture-maker in the Tidewater region--one that not only reflects high level of social success, but also Petersburg's importance as a regional commercial center (see Appendix B). After his death in 1813, Mary C. Mason assumed control of the business and hired her brother, William Russell, to manage its daily operations. He soon inherited the business which he apparently ran into the 1830s. In short, the individual histories of this furniture-making family are considered together they represent a major part of the trade in Petersburg. Furthermore, a number of important social and economic patterns emerge that perhaps suggest the experiences of other local artisan families.

In November 1806 George Mason advertised for the return of a stray horse that could to be delivered either to him or to "Mr. Joel Brown, on Old Street," a Windsor chairmaker whose shop was located across the street (see Brown, Joel). Three years later Mason took on an apprentice named "Toma," a free black bound out by the Overseers for the Poor in Greenesville County. In 1810 Mason advertised his "Cabinet Makers Business" on Old Street where he had "on hand a parcel of prime MAHOGANY" and intended to carry on the business "in the most modern and approved style." Mason's building apparently was large enough that several rooms were rented to other interests. For example, in 1810 "Messrs. Laurent and Dufour" opened a "Fencing School...at Mr. Mason's, Old Street."

Success came quickly to Mason's cabinetmaking venture. In October 1811 he placed an advertisement that ran repeatedly for a year and thanked the public for its patronage, adding that he would continue to provide work in his line "in the most fashionable and faithful manner, and for sale at reduced

prices." This notice also suggests the continued growth of his shop, calling for the application of two journeymen and two apprentices. Mason's economic rise is further evidenced in the town records. Taxed only for himself in 1807 and 1810, by 1811 three white males--probably employees--were a part of his household. Also listed was one female, perhaps his wife Mary.

Mason also sold ready-made furniture that he imported. In 1813, for example, he announced "ELEGANT CHAIRS...THE subscriber in addition to a handsome assortment of Cabinet Furniture on hand, has just received fourteen Dozen very elegant and well made FANCY AND WIND*SOR CHAIRS, SETTEES, WRITING CHAIRS and MUSIC STOOLS, superior to any heretofore offered in this place." These may well have been from New York based on his successor's subsequent advertisements for Windsor and fancy chairs from that state. While such a bold promotion of outside manufactures is rather surprising in light of Mason's former business associations with Joel Brown, as well as the large number of Windsor chair shops, the importation of furniture into Petersburg became increasingly popular after 1800 and, in fact, gradually assumed a large portion of the local market. Later in 1813, Mason advertised his receipt of another fourteen dozen Windsor and fancy chairs, a gig, and, shortly, "a few Good MATTRESSES."

By August 10, 1813, Mason was "confined to bed," at which time he wrote his extensive will. His death was announced several days later. Mary Mason was named "sole heir and Executrix," and one month later Samuel White and Alexander Taylor, both of whom were local cabinetmakers, appraised his entire estate. An inventory of his shop buildings reveals a cabinetmaking operation that was, perhaps, the largest in town at that time, including eight workbenches, a turning lathe and tools, and a complete selection of cabinetmaking tools. Also listed were a large variety of finished and

unfinished seating, case, bed, "Fancy," and "Windsor" furniture, as well as an assortment of upholstery materials, a large quantity of cabinet woods, and, surprisingly, "1000 shingles." Mason owned several slaves, as well as a number of valuable vehicles including a "gigg," a "coachee," a "cart and harness," and a "hearse," the latter suggesting his involvement in the provision of funerary services. He also had a "small library of books."

In October 1813 Mary Mason advertised in The Republican:

Cabinet-Making

THE subscriber begs leave to inform the friends of her deceased husband, and the public, that she continues to carry on the CABINET-MAKING BUSINESS, in all its various branches, under the management of her brother William Russell, at the Shop, on Old Street, where every species of Cabinet Furniture may be had at the shortest notice, and on the most reasonable terms.

A contemporary insurance appraisal reveal that the shop was located on lot 42, land purchased by Mary's late father, local chairmaker Jonathan Russell from cabinetmaker William Stainback, and still occupied by his widow Martha (see Russell, Jonathan, Russell, William H., and Stainback, William). Apparently, upon his marriage to Mary Russell, George Mason moved both himself and his cabinetmaking operation to lot 42. Because the Russell family paid the property taxes on lot 42, Mason's disappearance from the local land tax records after 1811 can be explained by his moving into their home. The Russell family owned nearby property as well. For example, in 1811 they began to be taxed for a portion of lot 46.

Mary's enlistment of William to manage the shop was a logical one. He almost certainly still lived on the property. A later advertisement that describes his training with one of the "best workmen in the state" suggests

that he trained under Mason, rather than his father who died in 1801. As late as January 1814 Mary Mason continued to oversee the business and advertised for two cabinetmaking apprentices. Around that time, she married Martin Thayer, a member of the new Presbyterian Church in Petersburg and son of local blacksmith and nailmaker Sceva Thayer. In December 1815 Thayer paid the insurance on lot 42, identified as "four buildings on the South side of Old Street now occupied by myself and W^m. Russell." Notably, however, Martha A. Russell still lived on and owned the property. The structures Thayer insured were specifically referred to as a one story wooden dwelling house and a one story cabinet ware room that fronted Old Street, a 50' by 16' single story wood frame carriage house, and a large, three story brick cabinetmaker's shop and kitchen. This latter building was valued at \$3000, more than three times as much as any other building on the lot, and was certainly large enough to support the extensive cabinetmaking operation indicated in George Mason's will. Ownership of such buildings further reflects the considerable wealth of the Russell/Mason family.

Petersburg personal property tax records for 1815 list "Russell and Thayer," suggesting that Martin and Mary Thayer were still living on lot 42 with Martha Russell. After 1815, however, there is no record of Mary or Martin Thayer being involved in the cabinetmaking operation. One year later, the Thayers moved onto lot 43, property rented from the estate of Abraham Evans and William Russell took over sole management of the cabinetmaking shop.

In 1826 the original dwelling on lot 42 "burnt." At the time of the fire, the property was still occupied by William Russell, his family, and his mother Martha. Around that time Martin and Mary C. Thayer disappear from the city records, though one tax list suggests that they moved to New England sometime

before 1830. The Thayers had at least two children, Martin Russell Thayer and William P. Thayer, who by 1856 were living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Sangamon County, Illinois, respectively. Petersburg's Hustings Court records for that year note that the Thayer brothers deeded to Martha Peterson of Petersburg their deceased mother's property, the same lot 42 on Old Street "that was conveyed to to Jonathan Russell, dec^d. by William Stainback and wife by deed dated the 11th day of July 1793...and the same that was occupied as a dwelling or homestead by the late W.^m H Russell decd & his family."

Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book, No. 2, July 11, 1793, p. 358.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 20, 1806, 3-5.
The Republican, Petersburg, November 17, 1806, 3-5.
Order Book No. 4, Greensville County, Va., March 15, 1809, p. 345.
Petersburg Intelligencer, May 8, 1810, 1-2.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 24, 1811, 4-4.
The Petersburg Intelligencer, November 6, 1811, 4-2.
The Republican, Petersburg, August 3, 1812, 3-2.
The Republican, Petersburg, January 12, 1813, 4-5.
The Petersburg Intelligencer, August 13, 3-2.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, August 10, 1813, p. 85; September 13, 1813, p.89-91.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 8, 1813, 3-4.
The Republican, Petersburg, May 20, 1814, 1-1.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 70, December 11, 1815, p. 1769.
The Petersburg Intelligencer, March 24, 1815, 4-5.
Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 23, August 23, 1856, p. 611.
 William Moseley Brown, Blandford Lodge No. 3 A.F. & A.M. - A Bicentennial History, (Petersburg: Plummer Printing Co., 1957), p. 157.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1830.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1787-1830

MATTHEWS, GRAVES
Windsor Chairmaker

(1814-1817)

Beginning in 1814, the partnership of "Seaton & Matthews" advertised their Windsor chairmaking shop, located "a little below Powell's Tavern, on Sycamore, and nearly fronting Bank Street." Leonard Seaton and Graves

Matthews informed "the citizens of this place, and the country generally that they have on hand and intend constantly to keep an assortment of Windsor Chairs, made in the best and of the most approved fashions....TURNING executed in all its various branches to suit Mechanics" (see Seaton, Leonard).

Several documented Windsor side chairs from their shop are known, simple fan-back forms with bamboo turned legs, tapered spindles, and an unusual squaring of the leading edge of the seat--a pattern that appears on other Petersburg-area Windsors. One of the Seaton & Matthews examples, published in Paul Burrough's pioneering treatise Southern Furniture, includes a label that reads "ALL KINDS OF WINDSOR CHAIRS MADE & SOLD, (WARRENTED) BY SEATON & MATTHEWS, SYCAMORE STREET, PETERSBURG." Another labeled Windsor side chair (MESDA photo S-6569) has the additional description of their Sycamore Street shop being located "A LITTLE BELOW POWELL'S TANN__." (probably Powell's Tavern). Though no dissolution announcement for Seaton & Matthews is known, by 1815 Leonard Seaton was back in Richmond, where he had apprenticed with Windsor chairmaker William Pointer.

In 1817 Matthews became involved in another Windsor partnership, this time with Alexander Brown (see Brown, Alexander). That year "Matthews & Brown" offered a "TEN CENTS REWARD" for a runaway apprentice named James Denoon, who was described as "upwards of 20 years old, five feet three or four inches high, had black hair which curls, blue eyes, and is very much marked in the face by the small pox." Several months later the partners advertised again:

MATTHEWS & BROWN
CHAIRMAKERS,
SIGN-PAINTERS & TURNERS,

RESPECTFULLY inform their customers and the public in general, that they have now on hand and intend to keep, at their Shop on Old street, a few doors above French's Tavern, a general assortment of elegant

WINDSOR CHAIRS,

Settees, Bedsteads, Cradles, Gigg-Seats, Writing Chairs, and every other article in their line; - which they offer for sale, on the most accommodating terms.

PAINTING & GILDING

of every description, executed in the neatest manner, on short notice. Orders in either branch of their business, will be thankfully received & punctually attended to.

Their services closely parallel those offered by Joel Brown--probably Alexander's close relative--including a broad range of Windsor furniture forms, as well as turning, painting, and gilding. No further references to Matthews & Brown or to Alexander Brown on his own, are known. By 1818 the cabinetmaking partnership of Lewis Marks, Machie I'Anson, and Ezra Stith advertised their new shop located "a few doors above French's Tavern," possibly Matthews & Brown's old shop (see I'Anson, Machie D.).

Like many other local artisans, Matthews responded to the increased importation of northern furniture into Petersburg by following the lucrative trade routes down to North Carolina. In 1818 the firm of "Matthews, Ruth, & Co." was established in Raleigh, North Carolina:

THE SUBSCRIBERS

HAVE the pleasure of announcing to the Public, that they have established the Business of Chair Making, Sign Painting, Turning, &c. in the new House lately built by Mr. Edmund Lane, on Wilmington street, a few doors South of the Post-Office - where they will attend to any orders in their line which the public may favor them with - and where all Work will be executed with neatness and despatch, at the shortest notice.

GRAVES MATHEWS
DAVID RUTH.

N.B. They will take two or three BOYS from the age of 14 to 16 as Apprentices to the above business. They will endeavor to use every exertion to learn them the art of the Windsor Chair Making business, in all its various branches. Boys from the Country would be preferred.

MATTHEWS & RUTH

Within a year, the partners had removed their shop to "Newbern-street" where they carried on the same business under the new name of "Matthews, Ruth, & Co." No later references to their partnership are known.

Virginia Argus, Richmond, April 9, 1814, 4-2.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 70, December 22, 1815, p. 1832.

American Star, Petersburg, June 23, 1817, 2-4.

American Star, Petersburg, August 7, 1817, 3-4.

Raleigh Register, North Carolina, January 30, 1818.

Raleigh Register, North Carolina, April 10, 1818.

MILLER, ROBERT

(1802-1805)

Cabinetmaker, Warehouser?

Miller first appears in the local tax records in 1802, and one year later he advertised the removal of his "Ware-room one door higher on Bollingbrook Street, opposite Mr.Geddy's, Watchmaker." At this shop. Miller had on hand "an elegant assortment of FURNITURE of the very best quality." In 1804 he again publicized a selection of ready-made furniture, saying that he "wishes to inform the Public that he has on hand a quantity of fashionable MAHOGANY FURNITURE."

Miller died in March, 1805 and his obituary read ,"DIED On the same day, Mr. Robert Miller, Cabinet Maker of this town....As he lived, so he died." In April, 1806, Martha Rogers, the administratrix of his estate, advertised a "PUBLIC SALE" of his personal property; an inventory was recorded on the same day. Miller's estate appraisal totaled £63/14/11 and was undertaken by

four local citizens, three of whom--Alexander Taylor, Samuel White, and John Vaughan--were involved in the furniture trades (see Taylor, Alexander; White, Samuel; and Vaughan, John). The sale included "sundry pieces of Mahogany Furniture, a complete set of Cabinet-Maker's Tools, a quantity of Mahogany Timber sawed ready for use, and some other property of different kinds."

The Petersburg Intelligencer, August 30, 1803, 3-5.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, August 28, 1804, 3-5.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, March 18, 1805, 3-1.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, April 6, 1806, unp.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, April 10, 1806, p. 9.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, April 15, 1806, 1-3.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1802

NEAL, WILLIAM **Upholsterer**

(1816-1820)

William Neal, a British upholsterer, arrived in America in 1806 at the age of thirty-three. He first worked in Boston, on Washington Street, and in 1809 was listed in the local artisan directory as an "upholsterer." Later that year, he moved to Baltimore, where he noted his "many years experience in France and England" and his ability to produce "Drawing-room Curtains and Drapery of every description, executed in the first stile and elegance." By the time of the War of 1812, Neal was in Richmond. Along with his wife and four children he applied for status as a British alien.

William Neal is first recorded in Petersburg in the 1814 tax books, assessed for one white male and one black male below the ages of sixteen. It is not entirely clear if this is the upholsterer because two persons with that name resided in Petersburg through 1820. The sale of an extensive plantation in Dinwiddie County in 1818 by "William Neal," which included a wide variety of furniture, may well not refer to the upholsterer. However, it is clear that in

1816 William Neal, the artisan, advertised his business, located in the shop of John DeJernatt, one of Petersburg's more successful cabinetmakers (see DeJernatt, John):

THE SUBSCRIBER
HAVING COMMENCED THE
Upholstery Business,
Solicits the patronage of the inhabitants of
the town of Petersburg; having full
knowledge of the above business, in making
up all kinds of
FURNITURE
In a Superior Manner
SUCH AS
Sophas, Settees, Chairs
and all kinds of
Draperys & Drawing-room
CURTAINS & CARPETS,
cut and made to fit rooms, all kinds of
paperhanging, executed in the neatest
manner.

N.B. Old sophas & Chairs repaired in the
neatest manner by applying to the subscriber
at Mr DeJernett's, Cabinet-maker, Old street.

WILLIAM NEAL

Little else is known about Neal's career, though as one of the few local upholstery specialists, it might be suspected that he was in great demand great demand. Neal nonetheless encountered significant financial difficulties in 1819 and entered into a deed of trust with William Rose. That deed was put into effect in early 1820 when "sundry articles of Household and Kitchen furniture, one horse and cart, one cow, the balance of the lease of the house and lot now occupied by said Neal" were offered at a public sale. No other references to his activities in town are known.

Boston Directory, 1809.

Baltimore Evening Post, Maryland, September 5, 1809, 3-3.

Baltimore Directory, 1810-1812.

British Aliens in the United States During the War of 1812, compiled by Kenneth Scott, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.

The Republican, Petersburg, February 20, 1816, 3-4.

Petersburg Republican, January 14, 1817, 3-6.

Petersburg Republican, October 13, 1818, 4-1.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1814-1820.

POWELL, RICHARD and FAUX, JOSEPH (1783-1790)
Cabinetmakers, Carvers, Joiners, Turners, Gilders, Undertakers

The records of Richard Powell and Joseph Faux and their furniture-making tenure in Petersburg are, at best, rather sketchy. An advertisement of their subsequent business in Fayetteville, North Carolina may suggest their activities in Petersburg. Powell and Faux noted their European training and their ability to perform a wide range of woodworking services, including carving, a skill rarely mentioned by Petersburg furniture-makers.

Powell and Faux appear together in the 1787 Petersburg tax lists, an indication that they may probably lived in the same building. No mention is made of their business. Powell alone was noted in the 1788 tax lists, but a year he and Faux rented lot 49 in Blandford from Alexander Taylor, a cabinetmaker. Their stay there was apparently brief. Taylor's tax records for 1790 list lot 49 as "lately Faux & Powell's tenement."

Explaining their removal from the property is an advertisement in the February 1, 1790 issue of the Fayetteville Gazette:

POWELL & FAUX, Carpenters, Joiners, Cabinet-Makers, Turners, Carvers, Gilders, and Undertakers....having been regularly reared in the above branches in Europe, and their many years experience in America, flatter themselves that they can give satisfaction to all who would wish to employ them...

They will be in this town, if the weather permits, about the first of February next, and having five apprentices and a journeyman who is a master of his trade, can undertake any job within themselves.--Undoubted recommendations from Petersburg, Virginia.

can be produced, where they have lived almost seven years.

They also do sign painting in general.

A good price given for Walnut, Cherry, and birch.

N.B. The subscriber will remain some days in town, and will contract with any gentlemen who may wish to employ them.

Their provision of Petersburg references strongly suggest that they enjoyed some degree of success during their time in that town. "Powell & Faux" appear together again in the 1790 federal census, noted as living in a Fayetteville household with five free white males above sixteen years of age, one below that age--likely the apprentices and journeyman they mentioned in the above advertisement. Also listed are one female, and one slave. No further references are known.

John Bivins, The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820, p. 493.
Federal Census for 1790.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1787-1790

PRIEST, JOHN
Windsor Chairmaker

(1806)

In 1806, John Priest and George Dillworth announced the opening of their Petersburg shop, where they offered a variety of wares and services including "Wheat Fan making, Wire-work, of all kinds, Windsor Chairs, Settees, Riding Chair Bodies" and the making of "Japan and Copal Varnishes" (see Dillworth, George). This is the only known reference to their partnership. Priest's subsequent Windsor chairmaking businesses in other cities, as well as Dillworth's continuing production of only wheat fans and wire-work in Petersburg, suggests that each contributed different skills to the business.

After leaving Petersburg, Priest moved south to Nashville, Tennessee. By 1808 he advertised his "WINDSOR CHAIR MANUFACTORY" in a local newspaper, describing the services in detail under a wood engraving of a Windsor chair with dramatically splayed legs and the letters "I.P" incised on the seat. At his new location "on Water-Street, Near M. Jackson's gin" Priest not only made Windsor chairs, but also provided "SIGN PAINTING AND COACH PAINTING," a trade combination that was common in the Petersburg area. He remained in Nashville, possibly an indication that business was doing well, and in 1812 offered this creatively written public notice:

ON Saturday the 28th, December 1811, the renowned Don Carolus the Weaver, (alias) Charles McKarahan the Chairmaker, made his manly appearance before Benjamin H Bradford, Esq. to claim the amount of Ten dollars, which he knavishly suspected I owed him; but alas! The last was against him. His claim was upwards of three years of age, and his Donship was extremely mortified that he could not recover in justice, which was the cause of the splenetick publication in the last Clarion.--If I should attempt to exhibit an account of the discretion his Donship did I should consider myself out of the line of common honesty at least; and if his Donship means I plead payment of any amount by limitation, Favor it to be a RASH FALSEHOOD.--If character is to be kept his Donship has but little trouble.

By 1816, however, Priest had relocated to Columbia, South Carolina, where he announced his cabinetmaking partnership with James Beaty, the only reference to this venture.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, July 11, 1806, 4-2.

The Impartial Review and Cumberland Repository, March 24, 1808, 3-4.

Democratic Clarion and Tennessee Gazette, Nashville, January 7, 1812, 3-5.

Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Books, 1805, 1807.

POWELL, RICHARD (See FAUX, JOSEPH)

RAYMOND, JOHN
Cabinetmaker

(1815-post 1820)

Raymond's earliest Petersburg associations are with Betsey Allegrue, a successful "free black" businesswoman who after 1801 annually appears in the city tax lists paying for a "license," possibly an indication that she ran a boarding house. In October 1815 Allegrue insured her "three Buildings on the North side of Old Street in the Town of Petersburg now occupied by myself & John Raymond" (William Graham, an architectural historian at Colonial Williamsburg, believes that both Raymond and Allegrue may well have been French-Haitians, who arrived in town during the early national period). Listed on her portion of lot 7 on Water (Old) Street were two dwelling houses and a "store house," while local cabinetmaker John DeJernatt occupied the other part of the property.

Apparently Raymond moved out shortly thereafter. In November 1815 John Fisher, Allegrue's neighbor to the west, insured his "one building on the North Side of Old Street in the town of Petersburg now occupied by "Raymond & Ventus," referring to Raymond's cabinetmaking partnership with John Ventus, a free black cabinetmaker who trained and worked in Norfolk before moving to Petersburg in 1813 (see Ventus, John). The building they occupied was referred to as a "Dwelling house and Cabinet Shop." However, by March 1816 Raymond and Ventus were back on Allegrue's property, occupying a two story wooden "Cabinet Makers Shop & ware room." Such a building was not noted on Allegrue's previous insurance documents, and may well represent a new or altered structure.

In the highly detailed 1815 Petersburg tax lists, Raymond is recorded as a "free black." Curiously, the only possession he was assessed for was a silver watch. In August 1816 "Raymond & Ventus" advertised their cabinetmaking shop, located "A few doors (on the opposite side) above Maj. James Williams's and directly opposite the Old Petersburg Ware-house." In addition to thanking the public for its past patronage, they offered "an assortment of work in the line, which they can recommend and dispose of on as accommodating terms, as any manufactory in the borough." The notice went on to proclaim their ability to "execute and dispatch work, in the best, and most fashionable style." That year, Raymond and Ventus were taxed for three white adult males and one adult black male, possibly the apprentices and/or journeymen in their shop. Though both remained in Petersburg after 1820, no other references to their partnership or individual careers are known.

Subsequent tax records suggest that Raymond had some sort of personal or financial relationship with Allegrue. After her death in 1830, Allegrue's portion of lot 7 appears as "Raymond's former mansion."

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 69, October 15, 1815, p. 1682.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 53, November 14, 1815, p. 511.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 53, March 9, 1816, p. 573.
Petersburg Republican, August 13, 1816, 3-6.
Hurst, Norfolk, pp. 143-144.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1801-1830.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1806-1830.

REAMY, WILLIAM
Cabinetmaker

(1820)

The 1820 Census of Manufacturers in Virginia listed artisans and the number of persons they employed. Under the heading of "Cabinet Maker" in Dinwiddie County is "William Reamy," recorded as having one employee. It is

the only known reference to this maker, who may well have worked at Dinwiddie Courthouse or some other smaller center in that rural county.

1820 Census of Manufacturers, Virginia, microcopy no. 279, roll 18, item 376.

REYNOLDS, THOMAS
Cabinetmaker

(1803)

In his pioneering study of early furniture-making in coastal North Carolina, John Bivins concludes that Thomas Reynolds is likely the "Thomas Renald," who in July 1803 had a letter waiting for him at the Petersburg Post Office. One year later, a cabinetmaker named Jonathan Bird was also listed as having mail held for him in Petersburg, however by this time the Warrenton, North Carolina, partnership of "Bird & Reynolds, Cabinet-Makers" was in operation (see Bird, Jonathan). It is not clear whether the two artisans worked together in Petersburg, though the postal references suggest that they knew each other prior to moving to North Carolina. Little is known of their Warrenton venture. By 1807, the year of his death, Bird was in Charleston, South Carolina, where he apparently worked as a cabinetmaker.

Reynolds stayed in Warrenton at least until 1833, when he advertised for an apprentice or journeyman. During his lengthy career, Reynolds ran a considerable furniture-making operation, one that is well documented in Bivins' study. Perhaps striving to meet the region's growing interest in fashionable northern forms, he took on apprentices and journeymen who had previously worked in New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk. Further suggesting his manufactures are advertisements proclaiming his production

of mahogany sideboards, secretaries with "three fashionable columns,"
bureaus, and china presses.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, July 19, 1803.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, October 6, 1804.

Raleigh Register, North Carolina, August 6, 1804.

Raleigh Register, North Carolina, April 12, 1813.

Warrenton Reporter, October 22, 1824.

Warrenton Reporter, October 10, 1833.

John Bivins, The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820, pp. 495-496.

ROBERTSON, WILLIAM
Cabinetmaker, Grocer, Merchant

(1804-1819)

In 1806 William Robertson, first taxed in the city of Petersburg several years earlier, became involved in a cabinetmaking partnership with William Fore (see Fore, William). That year, "Fore & Robertson" announced their "Cabinet Business" on Bollingbrook Street where they had on hand, "a large and general assortment of Furniture, of the newest fashions; consisting of side-boards and bureaus, card, dining, and pembroke tables, secretaries and book cases, candle and wash stands, &c &c.." In 1806 Robertson, a native of Scotland, also applied for citizenship at the Hustings Court in Petersburg.

The partnership with Fore was dissolved in 1807 and Robertson assumed control of the operation "to carry on the Cabinet business in all its various branches." Four months later he "resolved to discontinue the cabinet business at this place" and announced a public sale of all his furniture stock, including "Secretaries and book cases, sideboards, card tables, bureaus, easy chairs, candle stands, portable writing desks, bedsteads, and a number of other articles too tedious to mention." Interestingly, no shop equipment or cabinetmaking tools are listed in the sale. A newspaper advertisement in September 1807

suggests Robertson's reasons for leaving the cabinetmaking business. In the notice, T. B. Robertson, a local lawyer, announced his intention to leave the country and said that his law business would be attended to by his brother William. In February 1809 the Post Office in Petersburg held a letter for William Robertson, still listed as a "cabinetmaker" in Prince George County (other cabinetmakers in this study received letters long after their death or after leaving the city). A month later Robertson received his citizenship papers, an indication that he had resided in America for at least five years.

By 1811 William Robertson expanded into the mercantile business. In October, he offered for sale "500 sacks BLOWN SALT, Liverpool filled --50 ditto GROUND ditto, country ditto--11 pieces superfine black cloth." That same month Allan Pollok, a native of Scotland working in nearby Richmond, gave notice in several Petersburg newspapers that Robertson would run the local branch of his mercantile business. In this new capacity, Robertson oversaw the sale, freighting, and charter of ships docked at City Point near present day Hopewell. In 1812 one of these freight advertisements was for the firm of "Bridges and Robertson," a reference to Robertson's additional business ventures with James Bridges.

Robertson lost his Bollingbrook Street home in the devastating Petersburg fire of 1815. He advertised in a local newspaper that during the catastrophe "a large number of books were taken out of my office by myself and were mislaid after being removed upon the flat near the river," among them a variety of law and history texts. He temporarily moved into a tenement in Blandford, formerly the estate of Major G. K. Taylor, that included a "spacious" dwelling, an "office kitchen," a "stable smoke house," and "other customary out houses." By October 1815 "William Robertson, & Co." was in operation, although that same year, letters for "Wm Robertson, Cabinet Maker"

were still being received at the Petersburg Post Office. Robertson was, by this time, a relatively wealthy man, possessing a number of slaves, as well as horses and an expensive carriage. His household was filled with at least nine pieces of case furniture, ten tables of various sorts, eighteen Windsor chairs, a piano forte, and a wide variety of other furnishings, including venetian blinds on the windows.

During this period, Robertson served as an agent for the Scottish firm of "Buckanon & Pollok" and as an executor for the estate of Robert Pollok. In fact, Robertson may well be the same person who, as early as 1783, was working for the Glasgow mercantile firm of "Buckannan, Henry, & and Co." that sent wares, including nails and furniture hardware, directly to Petersburg and New York. The 1816 will of Allan Pollok, a resident of Chelsea in King William County, noted that his "good friend William Robertson" was to continue "winding up and adjusting his affairs." By 1817 Robertson owned property on Market Street. Later that year he was reelected as a delegate to serve in the upcoming session of the Virginia Legislature. He continued his grocer's business, located on St. Paul's Lane, offering salt and "50 crates well assorted Queensware." However, by early 1818 the partnerships of "Bridges & Robertson" in Richmond and "William Robertson & Co." of Petersburg were dissolved.

While it is clear that Robertson's shipping and grocery operations in both Petersburg and Richmond brought him considerable wealth, these later dissolution notices and his subsequent sale of personal property suggest financial difficulties. In 1819 he offered for sale three lots "in elligable parts of Pride's Field" including the "improved lot at present occupied by Mr. Robertson." This property was fully equipped with a dwelling house and offices. Included in the sale were "Household and Kitchen furniture" and a

"valuable Negro Blacksmith about 22 years of age." Despite his apparent economic difficulties after 1817, Robertson's varied career, including election to public office, successful management of a mercantile firm, and ownership of a several valuable properties, indicates a level of social achievement attained by few other early Petersburg furniture-makers.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, March 3, 1806, unp.
The Republican, Petersburg, November 17, 1806, 4-3.
The Republican, Petersburg, February 5, 1807, 4-1.
The Petersburg Intelligencer, June 23, 1807, 3-5.
The Republican, Petersburg, September 30, 1807, 4-1.
The Republican, Petersburg, February 9, 1809.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1808-1812, March 6, 1809, unp.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 24, 1811, 4-3.
The Republican, Petersburg, November 11, 1811, 3-3.
The Republican, Petersburg, February, 17, 1812, 4-5.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 3, 1815, 4-5.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 6, 1815, 4-3.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 27, 1815, 3-4.
The Republican, Petersburg, December, 5, 1815, 3-4.
The Republican, Petersburg, December 12, 1815, 1-2.
Henrico County Will Book No. 5, 1816-1822, March 4, 1816, p. 67.
Petersburg Republican, February 21, 1817, 3-5.
Petersburg Republican, April 18, 1807, 3-4.
Petersburg Republican, December 5, 1817, 1-2.
Petersburg Republican, April 14, 1818, 3-2.
Petersburg Republican, April 9, 1819, 3-6.
Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1804-1820.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1804-1820.

RUSSELL, JONATHAN
Chairmaker

(1793-1801)

In 1793 Jonathan Russell purchased "One certain Piece parcel and Lot of Land lying & being in The town of Petersburg aforesaid, and on the South side of the said Town called old Petersburg....the aforesaid lot 42" from local cabinetmaker William Stainback and his wife Ann. Although nothing is

known about Russell's furniture-making career in Petersburg, an inventory of his estate taken after his death in 1801 strongly suggests that he was a chairmaker (see Appendix C). Administered by his widow Martha Ann, the inventory reveals a large assortment of elegant and modest household furnishings, and several slaves. Russell's shop materials include thirteen Windsor chairs, an assortment of woodworking equipment, among which is "1 Sett Turning Laithes," "3 Work Benches," "1 Grind Stone," "1 Chest Tools including 3 saws," "16 Poplar planks," and a "parcel of Chair makers material & unfinished chairs." One other entry worth noting is Russell's ownership of a schooner named the "Martha Ann," valued at £700, or roughly 61% of the total value of his personal property, excluding lot 42 and its appurtenances. This valuable vessel, along with a "lighter or skew" valued at £35, suggest that Russell may have been involved in the shipping of wares, possibly his own, along the Appomattox River and its estuaries.

Petersburg land tax lists reveal that Martha Russell continued to live on lot 42 through 1827, though the 1826 records note that the building, referred to as the "widdow's mansion," was damaged by fire. During this period, the Russell's daughter, Mary C. Mason, married local cabinetmaker George Mason. He moved into the Russell family and on that lot established one of the most extensive furniture-making manufactories in early Petersburg. When he died, Mary assumed control of the shop and hired her brother William H. Russell to serve as foreman (for more on Russell's family members who continued in the furniture-making business, see Mason, George and Mary.C., and Russell, William H.).

Petersburg Hustings Court Record Deed Book 2, July 11, 1793, p. 358.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book, Vol. 1, 1784-1805, April 6, 1801, p. 318.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1827.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1787-1827.

RUSSELL, WILLIAM H.
Cabinetmaker

(1813-post 1820)

William H. Russell was a member of the prolific Russell/Mason furniture-making family of Petersburg. In 1793 Russell's father Jonathan, a local chairmaker, purchased lot 42 on the south side of Old Street in Petersburg from local cabinetmaker William Stainback and his wife Ann (see Russell, Jonathan and Stainback, William). It included "the Appurtenances thereunto belonging, together with all Houses buildings and byways." The Russells had at least two children, Mary C. Russell and William H. Russell. Upon Jonathan's death in 1801, Martha remained on the property with them. Mary Mason went on to marry local cabinetmaker George Mason, who moved his furniture-making business to the lot 42 site where it flourished (see Mason, George).

Mason died in 1813, and Mary took over the furniture-making business:

Cabinet-Making

THE subscriber begs leave to inform the friends of her deceased husband, and the public, that she continues to carry on the CABINET-MAKING BUSINESS, in all its various branches, under the management of her brother William Russell, at the Shop, on Old Street, where every species of Cabinet Furniture may be had at the shortest notice, and on the most reasonable terms.

An inventory of Mason's shop taken at the time of his death reveals that it was, perhaps, the largest in Petersburg at that time. His "Cabinet Makers shop and Kitchen" located in an expensive three story brick building on the back of lot 42, included eight workbenches, a complete set of cabinetmaking tools, and a large variety of finished and unfinished furniture (see Appendix B). In 1814

Mary advertised for two apprentices to the cabinetmaking trade, noting that "Boys from the country will be preferred, must be well grown and from fourteen to fifteen years of age." Around this time, she married Martin Thayer. They lived on lot 42 with her mother Martha and brother William.

After the devastating July 1815 fire, which destroyed nearly two-thirds of the city, the Petersburg mercantile firm of "Rynex & Gardner" noted that because of the fire, they were removing to Martin Thayer's house on Old Street "next door to Mr. William Russell's Furniture ware room," an indication that by this time Mary was no longer directly involved in the family cabinetmaking operation and that the Thayers were living next door on lot 43, a move documented in the local tax records.

William Russell's independent management of the business was formally announced in 1815:

Cabinet Making Business
William Russell

HAVING commenced the cabinet making at the shop formerly occupied by George Mason, intends carrying on in the most extensive line. Having served his apprenticeship with one of the best workmen in the state, he flatters himself he shall be able to give general satisfaction to all those who may please to favor him with their custom. He has on hand a very excellent stock of the best St. Domingo Mahogany, amongst which are some elegant curls, and will be enabled to finish work of every description and of the most fashionable kind, in a superior style to any in the place, having the best workmen which can be procured. Country gentlemen who may please to favor him with their orders, may rely on their being punctually attended to.

TURNING

Of every description, will be done at his shop, and executed with neatness and dispatch.

The whole of the above work will be done for the lowest cash prices.

It is probable that Russell's apprenticeship was served under Mason and not Jonathan Russell, a theory based not only on the strong Russell/Mason family connection and the extensive size of Mason's shop, but also on Jonathan's death in 1801 when William was still a child.

William Russell both produced and imported furniture. In May, 1815 he declared that he had just received for sale "Sixteen Dozen Elegant Fancy and Windsor CHAIRS MADE in the state of New-York," continuating George Mason's shop practice of importing fancy and Windsor seating furniture. Russell also offered for sale "ten gallons best Japan Varnish, of a superior quality." In June 1815 Russell advertised for additional cabinetmaking apprentices, and several months later, he received a "Fresh Supply of FANCY & WINDSOR CHAIRS From NEW*YORK; which will be sold at the New-York retail prices," as well as "One dozen best Curled hair MATTRESSES, From PHILADELPHIA."

In addition to importing goods, Russell brought in craftsmen from northern cabinetmaking centers. In July 1816 he notified the public that "Having engaged six or seven workmen, who served their time in the first shops in Philadelphia, New-York and Baltimore, these, together with his former hands, will enable him to execute all orders at the shortest notice." Russell also asked for "three or four apprentices" to apply, and by this time his shop was as large if not larger than it had been during Mason's tenure. In the same advertisement Russell declared that "he has also constantly on hand, an elegant assortment of fancy and Windsor Chairs, writing or secretary Chairs, Settees, Music Stools, gilt framed Looking Glasses, &c. &c.--The whole of which will be sold at the New-York retail prices." An 1817 notice for the opening of Elizabeth Davis's School, located "directly opposite Mr. William Russell's Cabinet Ware Room," indicates that he maintained Mason's lot arrangement,

with the furniture wareroom fronting Old Street and the large brick shop on the back of the property.

Russell's emphasis on the sale of imported wares reflects Petersburg's growing dependence on the products of other regions. After 1800, the town aggressively developed its role within the emerging national economy, particularly in the areas of tobacco, wheat, and cotton processing. At the same time, the growth of northern manufactories and considerable improvements in transportation systems brought to Petersburg an increasing amount of fashionable, competitively priced goods that, in turn, presented considerable competition for local artisans. Many furniture-makers either went out of business or relocated to other smaller centers where the influence of outside importation was not as great. Other artisans, including Russell, maintained furniture warerooms where they could offer both locally made and imported goods.

Russell was one of the few local furniture-makers to remain successful into the 1820s. He also participated in a variety of other local activities. For example, while fighting a fire in 1820, he misplaced a "white PLUME, belonging to Mr. P.E. Gill" and "a pair of short BOOTS," which had been placed "under a work bench in the back yard of Mr. Leonard Seaton's house" (Seaton was a local Windsor chairmaker and this reference to an outdoor work bench is unique in the Petersburg records). Russell died sometime after 1830, and the deed to lot 42 reverted to his sister, Mary Thayer. She passed the property on to her two sons, Martin Russell Thayer and William P. Thayer, who by 1856 were living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Sangamon County, Illinois, respectively. The Petersburg Hustings Court records for that year note that the Thayer brothers deeded to Martha Peterson of Petersburg their deceased mother's property, the same lot 42 on Old Street "that was conveyed to to

Jonathan Russell, dec^d. by William Stainback and wife by deed dated the 11th day of July 1793...and the same that was occupied as a dwelling or homestead by the late W.^m H Russell decd & his family."

Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 2, July 11, 1793, p. 358.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book 1, April 6, 1801, p. 318.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book 2, 1806-1827, August 10, 1813, p. 85; September 13, 1813, pp. 89-91.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 8, 1813, 3-4.
The Republican, Petersburg, May 20, 1814, 1-1.
The Republican, Petersburg, October 3, 1815, 1-3.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 70, December 11, 1815, p. 1769.
Petersburg Intelligencer, March 24, 1815, 4-5.
Petersburg Intelligencer, May 26, 1815, 4-4.
Petersburg Intelligencer, September 22, 1815, 4-1 and 4-4.
Petersburg Intelligencer, September 16, 1816, 4-5.
Petersburg Republican, May 30, 1817, 3-5.
Petersburg Republican, March 3, 1820, 3-5.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1793-1820.
Petersburg Land Tax Petersburg, 1793-1820.
Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 23, August 23, 1856, p. 611.

SEAL, JAMES
Cabinetmaker

(1804)

The only known reference to James Seal, "cabinet-maker," is an October 1804 announcement of a letter held at the Petersburg Post Office. Similar notices were placed in 1803 and 1804 for cabinetmakers Jonathan Bird and Thomas Reynolds, who like Seal, are not known to have ever worked in Petersburg (see Bird, Jonathan and Reynolds, Thomas). Possibly Seal was a journeyman or apprentice in one of the local cabinetmaking shops.

The Petersburg Republican, October 6, 1804, 3-4.

SEATON, LEONARD H.
Windsor Chairmaker

(1814-1816, 1818-1820)

Though Leonard Seaton began his furniture-making career as a poor orphan, he eventually attained economic independence and established successful Windsor chairmaking shops in both Petersburg and Richmond. In January 1800 the Overseers of the Poor for the city of Richmond bound "Leonard Seaton, orphan of Augustine Seaton deceased, unto William Pointer until he arrives at the age of Twenty-one years, The Court adjudging the said Leonard to be seventeen years of age at this time." Pointer was a prolific Windsor chairmaker in Richmond, and signed examples of his work are documented.

By 1808 Seaton was a partner in the Richmond chairmaking firm of Hobday & Seaton with John Hobday. At their shop, adjacent to the City Hotel in Richmond, they offered "FANCY & WINDSOR CHAIR-MAKING, TURNING, SIGN-PAINTING, GILDING, &C." In 1811 "Hobdy and Seaton, Chairmakers" took on fourteen year old Fleming Mosely, who like Seaton was an orphan. Hobday & Seaton was dissolved by mutual consent in April 1812. Seaton assumed control of the business and advertised that he would "continue the Chair Making business at the old stand." Hobday later became involved with James Barnes in a new Windsor chairmaking partnership, which sold a variety of furniture forms including chairs, settees, cribs, and cradles. Hobday & Barnes dissolved in 1817 and Hobday took over the operation.

Leonard Seaton's Windsor chairmaking shop was located in a massive furniture-making complex on the corner of 13th and Main Streets in Richmond. Insurance records from 1813 indicate that he resided on this lot with Edmund Webster and Robert Poore, partners in another Windsor

operation. In fact, on this impressive furniture production site was a "Dwelling & Store," a large wooden "Dwelling," a "Cabinet Maker's shop," two adjacent brick kitchens, and a "Dwelling & Chair maker's Shop." Seaton lived in the latter, a one story wooden building with an attached chairmaking shed. The concentration of these related trades may well have been an effective means for artisans to keep costs down, although within a year the partnership of "Webster & Poore" was dissolved, and the two brick tenements they occupied were sold, as was the "adjoining wood house, occupied by Leonard H. Seaton."

Seaton subsequently moved to Petersburg. In April, 1814, the partnership of Seaton & Matthews advertised their Windsor chairmaking business from a shop "a little below Powell's Tavern, on Sycamore, and nearly fronting Bank Street." Leonard Seaton and Graves Matthews informed "the citizens of this place, and the country generally that they have on hand and intend constantly to keep an assortment of Windsor Chairs, made in the best and of the most approved fashions....TURNING executed in all its various branches to suit Mechanics." Matthews, like many other Virginia Windsor chairmakers was involved in a variety of partnerships during his career (see Matthews, Graves). Several documented Windsor side chairs made by Seaton & Matthews are known, including simple fan-back forms with bamboo turned legs and tapered balusters. An example is illustrated in Paul Burrough's Southern Furniture bears the label "ALL KINDS OF WINDSOR CHAIRS MADE & SOLD, (WARRENTED) BY SEATON & MATTHEWS, SYCAMORE STREET, PETERSBURG." Another Windsor side chair (MESDA photo S-6569), has the additional description of their Sycamore Street shop being located "A LITTLE BELOW POWELL'S TANN__," probably a reference to Powell's Tavern on that same street.

No dissolution announcement for Seaton & Matthews is known. By 1815 Seaton had returned to Richmond. That year, Jacob Cohen of Philadelphia insured a Richmond building located next to Richard Crouche's estate and "occupied by Leonard H. Seaton." This property included a "Chair Maker's Shop & Dwelling." Matthews, on the other hand, stayed Petersburg and by 1817 had entered a Windsor chairmaking partnership with Alexander Brown (see Brown, Alexander). After the demise of that shop, Matthews moved down to Raleigh, North Carolina, where he made Windsor chairs, turned wooded wares, and painted signs with his new partner David Ruth.

By 1818 Seaton was again in Petersburg, where he opened a shop with James Barnes, formerly the partner of Seaton's ex-partner John Hobday--yet another example of the rather incestuous business relationships of many local Windsor chairmakers. Seaton and Barnes advertised their services in several local newspapers:

Fancy and windsor Chair
MAKING

SEATON & BARNES have commenced the above business, in the next house above Mr. Redmond's tavern, (formerly Powell's,) where they will execute work in their line in the best manner, and warrant it to stand.

Two apprentices will be taken to the above business.

N.B. Sign Painting will be done in the most modern manner.

Like many other furniture-making partnerships, theirs was short lived. Eleven months after opening, Seaton & Barnes went out of business, and the building they leased from local merchant Matthew Maben was offered for rent. It was described as "well calculated for a work shop, or Grocery, having

an excellent cellar, and a good counting room, sleeping room & Garret;" in 1820, the structure burned in one of that city's numerous major fires.

In a rather confusing progression of references, Seaton is recorded in the 1819 Richmond Directory as a chair maker, just below "William Seaton, chairmaker," who worked on the corner of 13th and F streets. Where Leonard's address should have been listed in the records, there is only a comma, perhaps indicating that he and William occupied the same building. No other references to a William Seaton, almost certainly a relative, are known. Yet shortly thereafter Seaton was recorded in Petersburg. Like a number of other local furniture-makers, he may have been involved in simultaneous operations in both cities. An 1820 advertisement placed in the Petersburg Republican by local cabinetmaker William H. Russell indicated that he misplaced some personal property while fighting a fire. The articles were placed "under a work bench in the back yard of Mr. Leonard Seaton's house." No further references to Seaton's business ventures are known, although the unusual mention of an outdoor work bench suggests that he may have still been producing furniture.

The Virginia Gazette, and Weekly Advertiser, November 22, 1783, 3-2.
Petersburg Hustings Court Order Book 4, 1797-1801, January 13, 1800, p. 357.
The Enquirer, Richmond, November 8, 1808, 3-5.
Petersburg Hustings Court Order Book 9, November 14, 1811, p. 419.
The Enquirer, Richmond, April 3, 1812, 3-5.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 68, June 2, 1813, p. 1192.
Virginia Argus, Richmond, April 9, 1814, 4-2.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 70, December 22, 1815, p. 1832.
The Star, and North-Carolina State Gazette, Raleigh, January 23, 1818, 3-4.
Richmond City Directory, 1819,
Petersburg Republican, March 3, 1820, 3-5.

SELDEN, JOHN
Cabinetmaker

(1776-77)

John Selden was probably the son of Elizabeth City County attorney John Selden and his wife Grace. Two year's after his father's death in 1754, John was apprenticed to John Brown, a carpenter in the city of Norfolk. By 1768 Selden was established as a cabinetmaker in Elizabeth City County where he ran a successful shop for the next eight years. Among his apprentices at that time were Edmond Allmond, who would later establish his own successful Norfolk cabinetmaking shop, and John McCloud, who began his apprenticeship in 1773 and later followed Seldon to Petersburg (see McCloud John).

Unfortunately, few details concerning Selden's Norfolk career are known, though some unrelated activities can be documented. For example, in 1769 Norfolk blacksmith Alexander Bell and his wife Susanna deeded Selden a lot on Bute Street in the city for £40. Signed examples of his work survive, several at Shirley Plantation in Charles City County. Indeed, his reputation as a skilled artisan may be gauged by his commission to refurnish the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg, activity necessitated by the sale of Lord Dunmore's personal property. Ronald Hurst concludes in his study of cabinetmaking in Norfolk that "Selden's known work is typical of that made in eastern Virginia's urban centers during the late colonial period, with 'neat and plain' exteriors and extraordinarily built interiors."

Selden was also involved in a variety of notable non-cabinetmaking activities. For example, in 1770 he was commissioned as a lieutenant in Governor Botetourt's Norfolk militia. That same year, he was listed as a signer of the "Association" in Norfolk, an organization dedicated to boycotting a

variety of British wares because of the newly imposed Revenue Acts. Selden participated in legal activities as well, including estate appraisals and jury duty. In one of these instances he chose not participate as a jurist, was subsequently fined, and then pardoned by Lord Dunmore.

Selden's Norfolk shop was destroyed when British and American troops burned the entire city in January 1776. His personal property losses were estimated at £815. That spring, Selden relocated to the village of Blandford in Prince George County, just outside of Petersburg (incorporated as part of Petersburg in 1784). A July 1776 advertisement placed in the Virginia Gazette indicates that "THE subscriber, having been one of the unfortunate sufferers at Norfolk, has removed to the place lately occupied by mr John Baird near Blandford where he carries on the CABINET-MAKING business, as formerly, in all its branches....He also has by him, ready made, several dozen neat mohogany, cherry and walnut chairs, tables, desks, tea boards, &c..." As with his tenure in Norfolk, more is known of Selden's non-cabinetmaking activities in Petersburg. For example, in January 1777 Selden was called upon to serve as the administrator for his deceased brother James's estate in Lancaster County. The public announcement of the sale of the land includes an addendum from John Selden that he was additionally selling "100 acres of land" in Fauquier County.

Selden was probably under forty years of age when he died in 1777. His wife, Elizabeth Wallace Selden, sold a portion of his estate, including a "variety of household furniture" and "two clocks." Seven years later, Robert Armistead, administrator of Selden's estate, was still seeking payments and settling outstanding debts. As of 1787, Selden's widow apparently had not remarried. She was assessed for two black males over the age of sixteen and three below. John Selden's estate continued to be charged land taxes until 1816, records that

specify his ownership of lot 96 in Blandford. In 1796 John Selden of Dinwiddie County, possibly the son or nephew of the cabinetmaker, sold a lot on Brewer Street in Norfolk to coppersmith and tinsmith William Dick.

Hurst, Norfolk, pp. 133-136.

William & Mary Quarterly, Vol. 5, July 1896, pp. 60-62, 264-267.

Minutes 1760-1769, Elizabeth City County, September 22, 1768, p. 592.

Deed Book 24, Norfolk County September 22, 1769, p. 204.

Virginia Gazette (Rind), July 26, 1770, 2-1 & 2.

Order Book, Norfolk County, March 19, 1773, p. 163a; May 21, 1773, pp. 175.

Deed Book 26, Norfolk County, October 21, 1773, p. 150a.

Virginia Gazette (Purdie), July 26, 1776, 4-1.

Virginia Gazette (Dixon & Hunter), January 3, 1777, 3-1.

Virginia Gazette (Purdie), January 3, 1777, 2-3.

Virginia Gazette (Purdie), December 12, 1777, 2-3.

Virginia Gazette or Independent Chronicle, Richmond, June 12, 1784, 4-1.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1816.

Williamsburg, Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections, accession file L1976-121.

SMITH, JOHN N.
Windsor Chairmaker

(1805)

The only known reference to John N. Smith is the dissolution of his Windsor chairmaking partnership with Archer Brown, a business known as Smith & Brown. Brown carried on the operation while Smith's later activities are not known (see Brown, Archer).

Petersburg Republican, January 18, 1805, 1-4.

STAINBACK, WILLIAM
Cabinetmaker

(1772-1819)

Stainback represents one of Petersburg's earliest specialized cabinetmakers, although his family had been in the area for a long time,

evidenced by the presentation of his grandfather's will at the 1739 Prince George County Court. By 1767 Stainback had a "4/" money claim in the local Bristol Parish Church. The birth of William and Ann Lambeth Stainback's daughters were listed in the church records, Elizabeth in 1766, Ann in 1769, and Rebecka in 1770.

Stainback advertised in the Virginia Gazette in December, 1772. The notice, with a Petersburg dateline, offered encouragement for "one or two CABINET and CHAIR MAKERS" to apply for employment, and added that Stainback would pay them weekly. He also apparently owned slaves. The Dinwiddie County tax records for 1784 note five black members of his household, and the Petersburg records for 1787 list two black males over the age of sixteen, and three below that age. During this period, Stainback provided a variety of wooden wares to local citizens, including a coffin that in 1789 cost the estate of James Fawcett £3:12:0, a significant amount of money at that time.

By 1788 Stainback resided on lot 42 in Petersburg. The next year, he paid the tax on this property, which by that time was rented to George Bevill. That same year a "Captain Stainback," who may or may not be the same person, lived on lot 30 with John Davis, property rented by Ann Thompson who owned five other rental properties in the city. Stainback was again listed on lot 42 by 1791, when he shared the residence with Williamsburg-trained silversmith James Geddy. Two years later Stainback and his wife Ann sold their "mansion" on lot 42 to local chairmaker Jonathan Russell, property that subsequently was occupied by Russell's descendents, many of whom were involved in local furniture-making operations (see Russell, Jonathan; Russell, William H.; Mason, George and Mary C.).

Despite his longevity, Stainback's appearances in the Petersburg records are scarce. Between 1798 and 1805 he paid the city for an unspecified licence. In 1798 he was named in a local lawsuit. Later that year a letter addressed to "Capt. Wm. Stainback" arrived at the Post Office. One year later William and Ann Stainback sold a lot of land in Princess Anne County to Elizabeth Hunter for £50, property that was part of the inheritance Ann and her late sister Elizabeth Thelabell received from their father Nathaniel Thelabell. In 1801 Stainback helped to appraise Jonathan Russell's extensive estate (see Appendix C), and two year later he was ordered by Petersburg's Hustings Court to appraise the estate of John Burns, a local carpenter.

The Mutual Assurance Society records for 1803 indicate that Stainback owned lots 4 and 5 in Petersburg, and that he insured a 16" by 14" one-story wooden dwelling on lot 4 (curiously, the tax records never indicate his ownership of any buildings on lot 4). By 1812 a larger single-story wooden dwelling house and a single-story kitchen had been added onto lot 5. After 1818 several tenements were listed on the property. Importantly, no mention of any workshop is found in any of these early nineteenth century references, perhaps an indication of Staiback's involvement in other business ventures during this period.

Although Stainback was one of the earliest established cabinet makers in Petersburg, tax records between 1788 and 1820 strongly suggest that he never achieved more than a modest degree of wealth. Furthermore, during the last decades of his life, it is not clear if he continued to work as a furniture-maker. Stainback's will, entered into the Hustings Court records in October 1813, was proved after his death six years later and Ann Stainback was named as the "sole beneficiary and Executrix." Beginning in 1820 the "Estate

of William Stainback" was taxed for the lot 5 property, which by that time had a land value of \$2625 and buildings worth \$1750.

The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish in Virginia, 1720-1789, p.p. 24, 103, 213, 369.
The Virginia Gazette (Purdie & Dixon), Williamsburg, December 3, 1772, 2-3.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, September 19, 1789, p. 9.
Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 2, July 11, 1793, p. 358.
Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, June 22, 1798, 4-2.
Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, July 3, 1798.
Deed book 5, 1798-1800, Norfolk County, September 24, 1799, p. 272.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, April 4, 1803.
Petersburg Hustings Court Wills, Vol 1, 1784-1805, April 6, 1801, p. 318.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 29, June 23, 1803, p. 2055.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, January 7, 1812, p. 1177.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, October 18, 1813 and March 18, 1819, p. 159.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1820.
Petersburg Tax Books, 1788-1820.

SWANN, SAMUEL (see Ellis)
 Cabinetmaker

(1795-1797)

TAYLOR, ALEXANDER
 Cabinetmaker

(1787-1805)

In Petersburg's 1787 tax records Alexander Taylor was assessed for two white males and two black males above the age of sixteen and one black male below that age. In 1790 Taylor began paying taxes for his ownership of lot 16 in "Old Blandford," where he remained for the rest of his life. In 1791 Alexander Taylor, "cabinetmaker," received £1:2:6 from the money "Collected for the poor" in Petersburg for making two inexpensive coffins. Two years later he received an additional £2:8:6 for three coffins produced in 1789. In general, Taylor achieved a relatively high degree of wealth for an artisan. In 1790 and 1791 he rented a "tenement" on lot 49 in "New Blandford" to the local

cabinetmaking firm of Powell & Faux (Powell, Richard and Faux, William).

Through 1794 he owned a total of three lots in Blandford.

Taylor's fortunes took a turn for the worse in 1792 when his shop was destroyed by fire. The catastrophe was noted by a Baltimore newspaper, which also provided an editorial analysis of the event:

Petersburg, June 7

On Monday last, the shop of Mr. Alexander Taylor, cabinetmaker, of this town, was discovered to be on fire in the upper part of the house. The fire had spread itself considerably over the house before it was discovered, and prevented all attempts to save it. The exertions of some of the citizens on that occasion were truly meritorious, and the activity and vigilance of the Negroes deserve the highest commendation - but we are sorry to observe that too many of the citizens, whose interest was intimately connected in putting an end to so destructive an element, appeared wanting in that day which members of the same community owe to each other. Numbers stood looking on, when they ought to have been more active on so distressing an occasion.

However, Taylor's business apparently rebounded quickly from this loss. By September 1793 he provided an expensive coffin for the estate of William Hunter at £3:12:0, the same price charged by Petersburg cabinetmaker William Stainback in 1789 for a similar coffin.

Through 1797 he continued his involvement in the production of inexpensive coffins for the poor and costlier coffins for members of Bristol Parish Church. Insurance records from May 1798 describe his lot 16 property, located on Main Street in Blandford, as being adjacent to the home of the late cabinetmaker John McCloud. Taylor's property included a wooden single-story "dwelling house" and a two-story wooden "Cabinet Makers shop" (see McCloud, John). The dwelling was insured for \$1000 and the shop for \$500. The latter

building, located on the corner of the lot, fronted Main and a "cross street." The dwelling was set back in the middle of the lot, a building arrangement used by other Petersburg furniture-makers. Taylor also owned black servants, numbering from six and nine annually between 1790 and 1802 they .

In 1802 his son Alexander, Jr. became a partner in the cabinetmaking business (see Taylor, Alexander, Jr.). At that time the number of adult white males Taylor paid taxes on jumped from two to five, suggesting that the shop simultaneously took on several journeymen or apprentices. In July 1804 "TAYLOR & SON" advertised a "SIX CENTS REWARD" for the return of an apprentice named Michael Burke. Burke was described as being "about nineteen years of age, "5 feet, 3 or 4 inches high, spare made, black eyes and hair, carried with him all his clothing, consisting of a dark blue cloth coat, round brown Holland jacket, two virginia cotton shirt, two pair nankeen pantaloons, and one pair brown Holland trowsers." While documentary evidence indicates that the Taylors ran a substantial cabinetmaking operation, little is known about their specific manufacture.

On June 26, 1805, Alexander Taylor died at the age of sixty-eight, and was described in his obituary as an "old and respectable inhabitant of this town." He was buried in Blandford Cemetery alongside his wife Sarah, who had died four years earlier at the age of fifty-four. Alexander Taylor, Jr., completed an inventory of the property, and local cabinetmaker Samuel White served as one of the appraisers. The entire estate, valued at \$1,898.25, included five black servants (one man, two women, and two boys) and a variety of household and kitchen furniture. Tax records after 1806 indicate that the younger Taylor took over the financial responsibilities for the estate and continued to operate the cabinetmaking operation on the family lot 16 in Blandford.

Among Alexander Taylor's personal possessions at the time of his death was a "small library" that included a "Cabinet makers Guide" valued at \$4.00. Later evidence indicates that this was a reference to Thomas Chippendale's influential The Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director (see appendix D). The volume was inherited by Alexander, Jr., who went on to a long and distinguished career as both a cabinetmaker and public servant. When he died in 1820, his estate included a "parcel of books, among which is the Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director, comprehending one hundred and sixty copper-plate engravings of the most elegant designs of household furniture, &c." Ownership of this work by two generations of Petersburg cabinetmakers reveals one way in which British cabinetmaking traditions were brought to the Petersburg area.

The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish in Virginia, 1720-1789, pp. 254, 268.

Dinwiddie County Tax Books, 1787.

Baltimore Daily Repository, Maryland, June 14, 1792, 4-1.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, September 30, 1793, p. 18.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, July 6, 1804, 3-2.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1784-91, September 6, 1791, p. 131.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1791-1797, June 3, 1793, p. 81; July 7, 1794, p. 128.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol 10, May 26, 1798, p. 116.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, unp., September 1, 1800.

The Republican, Petersburg, June 28, 1805, 3-3.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, unp., August 8, 1805.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, October 15, 1807, p. 38.

"Old Blandford Tombstones," in William & Mary Quarterly (1), vol. 5, p. 234.

Petersburg Republican, May 5, 1820, 1-2

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1788-1820

Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1820

TAYLOR, ALEXANDER, JR., CAPTAIN
Cabinetmaker

(1801-1827)

In 1801 Alexander Taylor, Jr., helped appraise the estate of local carpenter Baldwin Pearce (notable among Pearce's property was a set of "saw mill saws" and a "screw machine"). One year later he became a partner in "Alex^r. Taylor & Son" with his father, under who he probably served his apprenticeship (see Taylor, Alexander). In 1802 the younger Taylor began long public service career with his appoint to serve as "Captain of Patroles in Blandford Ward." The Hustings Court returned him to office in 1804.

City tax records for 1802 indicate that the Taylors' shop, located on lot 16 in "Old Blandford," included a 30' x 24' "Cabinet Makers shop" fronting Main Street on the corner of a "cross Street." Both artisans lived at this site, in a house located toward the center of the lot that was adjacent to the property of John McCloud, a local cabinetmaker who died in 1795 (see McCloud, John). The Taylors ran a substantial furniture-making operation, which included a number of white male employees, not all of whom were amenable to the situation, as evidenced by the partners' 1804 advertisement for the return of a runaway apprentice named Michael Burke.

When the elder Taylor died in 1805, Alexander, Jr., served as administrator of the portion of his father's estate that was "exclusive of his interest in Taylor & Son." In August 1805 Taylor, Jr., advertised as the "surviving partner of Taylor & Son," noting that he would "continue the Cabinet-making business on my own account, at the shop lately occupied by Taylor & Son in Blandford -- where furniture and cabinet wares, of every description, faithfully made and elegantly finished, may be had on short notice." During this time he continued to live on the Taylor family property

on lot 16 in "Old Blandford." Insurance records for 1805 document the addition of a porch to the dwelling, and indicate that Taylor lived with Daniel P. and Mary Hanson.

Taylor continued his involvement in a wide variety of non-cabinetmaking activities. In 1806 he appraised the estate of Robert Miller, a Petersburg cabinetmaker. Three years later he was elected a freeholder in the Common Hall of Petersburg, and he subsequently was selected to serve as alderman. Taylor was also appointed Captain of one of the newly arranged "Patroles of 8" serving the Blandford Ward in 1809. His business remained profitable and he apparently maintained his father's steady coffin production. In 1810, for example, he charged the estate of Frances Durfey "Sixteen dollars 10 1/2 Cents -- for a Coffin."

The War of 1812 led to Taylor's participation in activities outside of his trade. When the Petersburg Republican Light Infantry formed that year to fight the British, "ALEX'a TAYLOR, Captain" advertised a "Battalion Muster" to take place on Saturday, May 9 on Centre Hill in Petersburg. He later participated in a number of local military parades. During this period, Taylor was re-elected to the Common Hall and again served as an alderman. Apparently Taylor's infantry never went to battle, for as early as September 1813 he helped appraise the extensive estate of Petersburg cabinetmaker George Mason.

The tax lists for 1812 assess Taylor for six adult white males and four adult black males, suggesting that he, like his father, ran a rather large cabinetmaking shop. Just one year later only 1 black and two females are noted in the household, perhaps an indication of Taylor's increased attention to his military duties. In 1814 Taylor received \$50 for a "Mahogany Coffin, materials for ditto & hire of Herse," an indication that he provided a range of

funerary services beyond coffinmaking. In 1816 Taylor and cabinetmaker/coffinmaker Samuel White received the endorsement of the local coroner, and after Taylor's death, his estate inventory revealed that he co-owned "1 Old Hearse and Harness" with White.

By 1815 Taylor was a relatively wealthy artisan. The extensive tax lists for that year note that he was assessed for three white and four black males, as well as a "free black." Taylor owned a variety of mahogany case furniture, Windsors chairs, a Windsor or fancy settee, seventeen "pictures," and two looking glasses. During this time, he continued to be elected to the Common Hall, and in June 1816 he was involved with a group organizing a celebration of the upcoming 30th "Anniversary of American Independence." Taylor also retained command of a Petersburg infantry troop. In 1817 he was elected as one of the "commonwealth's justices of the peace" for Prince George County.

All the while, he maintained his cabinetmaking business, concentrating on the production of coffins and the provision of funerary services. In 1817 he charged the estate of Paul Nash \$55 for a coffin and \$8.15 for "Services as Coroner holding Inquisition." In fact, Taylor had a considerable hold on the local funerary market. He was not only able to charge clients for coffinmaking and hearse service, but also for inquests and services as coroner, a lucrative appointment for someone with his business interests.

At the time of his death in 1820, Taylor was in the process of providing new furniture for Blandford Masonic Lodge No. 3, where he was a member and officer. This commission stemmed from the destruction of the lodge building by fire on March 8, 1819, a catastrophe that devastated much of Blandford. Lodge records reveal that in order to finance the refurnishing program, each member was charged a fee of five dollars to cover the cost of new jewels,

working implements, and "furniture." Taylor received a Masonic funeral on March 29, 1820, and the lodge was draped in mourning for 60 days. Curiously, despite his earlier wealth and notable status within the community, Taylor may have been in financial trouble at the time of his death. Within a year his widow appealed to the members of Lodge No. 3 for "charity" to care for her children, and she received thirty dollars.

Although Taylor concentrated on coffin production throughout his career, an extensive shop inventory taken after his death indicates that the business also provided a wide range of furniture, including upholstered forms (see appendix D). Taylor's shop was one of the largest in area, and included twelve workbenches, three complete tool chests, a lathe, a complete assortment of cabinetmaking equipment, and a "quantity of old furniture" that probably were in for repair. Also listed were a wide variety of finished and unfinished furniture forms, a "Wax Work Case," an "Old Harpsechord," a "Guittar case of Pine," an assortment of upholstery materials.

An announcement of the sale of "All the Personal Estate of Captain Alexander Taylor" was placed by local cabinetmaker Samuel White, administrator of Taylor's estate. Among the items offered was a book referred to as the "Gentlemand Cabinet makers Guide 1 Vol," later more accurately described as the "Gentleman and Cabinet-Makers Director, comprehending one hundred and sixty copper-plate engravings of the most elegant designs of household furniture, &c," unquestionably a reference to Thomas Chippendale's The Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director, first published in London in 1754. Taylor had inherited the volume from his father, and, in fact, they represent the only Petersburg cabinetmakers whose ownership of a design book was documented. Interestingly, White enthusiastically endorsed the volume even though by 1820 it was almost seventy years old.

Administration of the estate was granted to White because Taylor's widow Charlotte and an unspecified person named "Dan^l. Hauser" refused the task. As a result, White oversaw the public sale of the remainder of Taylor's property, and advertised for rent the Blandford "LOT and TENEMENT...having an excellent garden, a good well of water and other conveniences...well calculated for the reception of a family, with every necessary out house." He also assumed responsibility for the administration of William Stevenson's estate, which previously had been overseen by Taylor.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, February 2, 1802, p. 75.
Petersburg Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, February 6, 1804, p. 369.
The Petersburg Intelligencer, July 6, 1804, 3-2.
Petersburg Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, part 2, September 3, 1804, p. 28.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, March 6, 1804, p. 216.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, October 15, 1807, p. 38.
The Republican, Petersburg, September 3, 1805, 4-4.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 64, December 24, 1805, p. 702.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, unp. April 8, 1806.
The Republican, Petersburg, June 10, 1809, 3-4.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1808-1812, Petersburg, unp., January 2, 1809.
The Republican, Petersburg, August 16, 1809, 3-5.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1808-1812, unp., August 6, 1810; July 1, 1811.
The Republican, Petersburg, May 7, 1812, 3-4.
The Republican, Petersburg, June 4, 1812, 3-4.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, September 13, 1813, pp. 89-91.
Will Book No. 6, 1822-1827, Henrico County, April 14, 1814, p. 82.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1812-1816, April 1, 1816; June 4, 1816.
Petersburg Republican, June 14, 1816, 3-3.
Petersburg Republican, June 18, 1816, 3-2, 3-3.
Petersburg Republican, March 28, 1817, 3-5.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, April 18, 1817.
Petersburg Republican, July 25, 1817, 3-6.
Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, January 15, 1818; August 20, 1818; October 16, 1818; November 21, 1818; June 17, 1819.
Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1819-1823, April 20, 1820.
Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, April 29, 1820, pp. 253a-254b.
Petersburg Republican, May 5, 1820, 1-2.
Petersburg Republican, May 30, 1820, 1-3.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1819-1823, June 16, 1820.
 William Moseley Brown, Blandford Lodge No 3 A.F. & A.M. - A Bicentennial History, (Petersburg:Plummer Printing Co., 1957), pp. 87, 110.
Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1788-1820.
Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1820.

TULLOCK, HUGH (TOLLOCH)
Cabinetmaker, Carpenter?

(1786)

The only reference to Tullock is an estate inventory taken after his death in 1786. The tools in his shop, as well as the listing of an unfinished chest of drawers, suggest that Tullock was involved in furniture-making (see Appendix E). The appointment of Alexander Taylor, a local cabinetmaker, and Timothy Ezell, a local carpenter, to appraise the materials supports this hypothesis (see Taylor, Alexander).

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book Number 1, 1784-1805.

VAUGHAN, DANIEL
Cabinetmaker

(1807-post 1820)

Vaughan differs from most of the other furniture-makers listed in this study in that his various shops were located outside of Petersburg's main commercial districts. He first appears in the city tax records in 1807, and in 1813 he purchased property from the estate of Timothy Ezell, a local carpenter. Vaughan purchased a variety of woodworking tools, as did David Vaughan, likely a relative. Interestingly, a local upholsterer named John Vaughan, perhaps another relative, worked in Petersburg as well (see Vaughan, John; Vaughan, Littleton R.). Among the items Daniel bought from Ezell's estate were "1 Lot plaines," 1 lot gagues," and "1 parcel mahogany." Although little is known about Vaughan's activities in the area, the extensive 1815 tax records

suggest that he attained a moderate degree of personal wealth, including ownership of a small number of mahogany furniture forms.

In 1818 the "house and lot formerly owned and occupied by Daniel Vaughan as a Cabinet Shop, lying on the corner of Harding and new Streets" was sold at auction. Within a year Vaughan moved to the "South side of Oaks street or Hallifax road" where he insured three building, including a "Cabinet Ware room" which fronted Oaks street, a "Cabinet maker shop" and an oddly proportioned building (60' by 19') listed as a "wooden shed." The 1820 Census of Manufacturers in Virginia lists a "Daniel Vaughan" in Cumberland County, who used 2000 feet of mahogany and walnut "plank" annually and employed "4 men and 1 boy" in a shop that was described as being in "good order," with an annual capital of \$2500, wages amounting to \$1000 and contingent expenses of \$150. It is quite likely that this refers to the same person. In fact, written on the reverse of this particular document is "Letersburg," probably a misspelling of Petersburg. Perhaps Vaughan ran a saw mill along the river in Cumberland.

By 1819 Vaughan was assessed for three white and three black adult males, as well as a carriage worth the considerable sum of \$500, an indication that he was a relatively affluent artisan. When Vaughan died in 1825 he owned a diverse assortment of expensive household furnishings, at least seven slaves, two lots on the Fairfax Road near the "Oaks Warehouse" valued at \$800, two log houses at \$200 that may have been slave quarters, a variety of vehicles, and a dwelling house and land together valued at \$3,000. Among the items listed in his cabinet shop inventory were a variety of finished and unfinished case furniture forms, an assortment of upholstered seating and bed furniture, and the only known reference to a "lathe & wheel" (see appendix F).

Petersburg Intelligencer, May 31, 1808, 4-2.

Petersburg Republican, February 24, 1817, 3-2.

Petersburg Hustings Wills No. 2, March 15, 1813, pp. 94-98.

Petersburg Republican, September 4, 1818, 3-6.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 56, March 18, 1819, p. 1307.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, September 19, 1825, 217b-218b.

VAUGHAN, LITTLETON R.
Cabinetmakers Apprentice

(1818)

In July 1818 Littleton R. Vaughan, orphan son of Enoch Vaughan, was apprenticed to Petersburg cabinetmaker Samuel H. Wills for a second time by Peter Vaughan, his legal guardian. Apparently, when Littleton was first bound, Wills' indentures were "not according to the Act of Assembly." The second indenture stipulated that Littleton Vaughan was to remain with Wills until "he be of the age to wit" on March 15, 1820. No further references to him have been found.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, July 17, 1818.

VAUGHAN, JOHN
Upholsterer, Coachmaker

(1798-1817)

In 1787, when the first property tax records for the city of Petersburg were taken, nineteen separate Vaughans were listed, including a "John Vaughan." Not until 1798, however, did "JOHN VAUGHAN, COACHMAKER" first advertise, offering for sale a coachee in Blandford. In 1805 he, along with local cabinetmakers Alexander Taylor and Samuel White, appraised the estate of Petersburg cabinetmaker Robert Miller (see Miller, Robert; Taylor, Alexander; White, Samuel). Shortly thereafter Vaughan, a native of Richmond, leased a "one story dwelling house" on Bollingbrook Street

belonging to John Bell, a Blandford resident. Little is known of his early trade activity. In 1808, "John S. Vaughan" printed a public retraction concerning his mistaken accusation of William Branch of Caswell County, North Carolina, who was said to have committed an unspecified "crime" and stolen some ribbon. Later that year Vaughan advertised his services as an "upholsterer" at a shop on Bollingbrook Street "adjacent to Mrs. Geddy's brick tenement. His movement into the upholstery trade was a logical one. Most coachmakers were skilled in methods of upholstery because of the fashion of covering carriage seats and bonnets. Vaughan noted that "he will undertake to furnish SOFAS & CHAIRS of every description, Bed and Window CORNICES and CURTAINS." In one of the few instances of a Petersburg furniture-maker recognizing the town's female clientele, Vaughan promised both "ladies and gentlemen" that his work would be "neatly and expeditiously executed." He also offered to repair and re-stuff "All kinds of Sofas and Easy Chairs."

If Vaughan was still working in the same shop in July 1815, he may well have lost it in the massive fire that destroyed much of Bollingbrook Street. Between that time and his death in 1817, Vaughan placed no further notices. An obituary noted that he died as a result of lingering complications from a broken leg that occurred some fourteen years earlier. Apparently Vaughan had saved a number of individuals at the falls of the James River in Richmond when he "boldly plunged into the foaming surge, regardless of every danger, and after the second attempt, rescued seven of his fellow creatures from inevitable death."

Dinwiddie County Tax Books, 1787.

Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, May 25, 1798, 3-1.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 64, July 1, 1805, p. 713.

Petersburg Intelligencer, April 15, 1806, 3-1.

Petersburg Intelligencer, May 31, 1808, 4-2.

The Republican, Petersburg, September 10, 1808, 3-5.

Petersburg Republican, February 21, 1817, 3-2.

VENTUS, JOHN (VINTUS, VENTRIS)
Cabinetmaker

(1813-post 1820)

In 1801 John "Vintus" was listed as a "free black" in the Norfolk Directory and as a "freeman" in the city tax records. It is also noted that he received a retail license. In his study of early Norfolk cabinetmaking, Ron Hurst surmises that this artisan is probably the "John Ventriss" who apprenticed to Norfolk joiner William Boushell beginning in 1787. Unfortunately, little else is known of Ventus's cabinetmaking career in Norfolk other than several of his shop locations.

In 1813 "John Ventriss," appears as a free black in the Petersburg tax books. By November 1815 Ventus was in partnership with John Raymond, also a free black (see Raymond , John). Their shop was located on the north side of Old Street on the property of John Fisher. Five months later the cabinetmaking firm of "Raymond & Ventus" had moved one lot to the east, onto a portion of lot 7 owned by Betsey Allergrue. Interestingly, the other part of lot 7 was occupied by cabinetmaker John DeJernatt (see DeJernatt, John). Raymond had formerly shared a residence with Allergrue, a relatively wealthy free black who first appeared in the tax records in 1801, and annually renewed a licence on the property, perhaps suggesting that she ran a boarding house. Among the buildings Raymond and Ventus rented from her was a "Cabinet Makers shop & Ware room," further described as a 20' by 16' two-story wooden building. Apparently this was a new structure because it is unlike any of those insured on Allégrue's portion of lot 7 the year before.

"Raymond & Ventus" advertised their Old Street shop in August 1816 as being "A few doors (on the opposite side) above Major James William's and

directly opposite the Old Petersburg Warehouse." In addition to thanking the public for its past patronage, the partners had ready "an assortment of work in the line, which they can recommend and dispose of on as accommodating terms, as any manufactory in the Borough" and "execute and dispatch work, in the best and most fashionable style." Tax records for 1816 suggest that their shop may have been moderately sized. They were assessed for three adult white males and one adult black male who were probably apprentices or journeymen in their shop.

By 1820 Raymond and Ventus appear separately in the tax records, and no subsequent references to their business activities, as partners or alone, are known. When Betsey Allergrue died, sometime around 1830, her house was referred to as "Raymond's former mansion," perhaps indicating a personal or financial relationship between the two.

Order Book, Norfolk County, 1787.

Personal Property, Borough of Norfolk, 1801.

Norfolk Directory, 1801.

Norfolk Directory, 1806.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol 69, October 25, 1815, p. 1682.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 53, November 14, 1815, p. 511.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 53, March 9, 1816.

Petersburg Republican, August 13, 1816, 3-6.

Norfolk, Hurst, pp. 148-149.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1801-1820.

Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1801-1820.

WHITE, SAMUEL
Cabinetmaker

(1790-1829)

The earliest references to Samuel White occur in the account books of Sir Peyton Skipwith of Prestwoud in Mecklenburg County. Beginning in 1790, White provided Skipwith and his wife Lady Jean with a wide variety of

furniture forms. Not surprisingly, the couple or their children purchased furniture from several other Petersburg shops as well, including upholstered Windsor chairs from Joel Brown, a portable writing desk from the mercantile firm of "Ross & Douglas" in 1799, and a pair of looking glasses from "Peters & Tufts" in 1818. In fact, although they lived a considerable distance away from any major urban centers, the affluent Skipwith's were able to order goods from numerous southern cities, including Windsor seating furniture from David Ruth of Raleigh, North Carolina in 1797, and a mahogany wardrobe from "Webster & Poore" of Richmond in 1810. It is also documented that they acquired furniture from Philadelphia and London.

White's work for the Skipwiths' 1790 to 1798 was considerable, and several bedsteads and perhaps a work table still at the house museum Prestwould can be attributed to him. In 1790 White provided a mahogany "Tent bedstead," in 1791 a "Book-case with brackets" and a number of "Low chairs," and in 1793 a "Small Medicine Chest. From June to November of 1797 he made a "Set 4 1/2 feet Dining Tables Mahog^y., "two Washstands w^t. Covers," "one Cabriole Chair" covered with sheeting, "three packing boxes for Tables," "two high post bedsteads" of birch, "French Sophy covered w^t. Sheetting," "one Square Card Table w^t. Drawer," "Wash Stand with Cover," "gothick book-case Lined," "three boxes for do," "twelve Mahog^y. Chairs," "tent bedstead - birch," and a "tent bedstead with Pavilion top." White's use of birch is the one of the few documented examples in Petersburg. The next year he provided a "high post bedstead mahogany, iron rod for ditto, Side board, Work Table, Packing box for Side board." His reference to the production of packing boxes is also unusual, though it must have been a fairly common practice for Petersburg artisans who shipped wares to much of central and southern Virginia, as well as northern North Carolina.

White's relationship with the Skipwiths was not without its problems. In 1796 he wrote to Sir Peyton discounting statements made by Frank Eppes, of Appomattox Manor at City Point, and Henry Skipwith that furniture made by White was prone to falling apart. He adamantly stated that neither man owned any of his work, "except Mr. Eppes an Octagon Dining table." Such allegations, however, did not prevent White from receiving payments for all of the furniture he made for Peyton Skipwith, via several intermediaries in both Petersburg and Norfolk

White's business location for the earliest years of his career are not known. In 1792 he rented an unspecified lot in Petersburg from James Byrne. In addition to the Skipwith commission, White produced coffins for the city, his fee being paid from "the Levy for the Poor." In 1796 Edward Bowman, Thomas Bowman, and James Mass, all orphans, were bound as apprentices to Samuel White. Three white males under the age of sixteen appear in his tax records for that year. By 1796 White was also taxed for three adult white males and one adult black male, probably employees in his shop. During this time White became involved in a rather unusual project. The local government announced that a penalty would be assigned to anyone "taking dirt from the Courthouse hill, except under the inspection of Robert Armistead and Samuel White." In 1804 John Armistead, perhaps a relative, became another of White's apprentices.

In May 1796 White provided three coffins for the estate of Michael Burke at the substantial cost of £6:6:0, considerably more than the coffins he produced for the poor. Shortly thereafter, the "curator" of the Burke's orphans received "By Cash of Samuel White for the Frame of a House which stood in the Alley leading to Richmond Graves, with liberty to remove the same to Sycamore Street on Land belonging to the orphans." Interestingly, in 1804

the Blandford cabinetmaking firm of "Taylor & Son" advertised for a runaway apprentice named Michael Burke, possibly one of the orphans mentioned in the account.

During this period, White was involved in a variety of activities in Petersburg. For example, he served as an officer in the "Bollingbrook Fire Company beginning in 1798." He advertised a reward in 1805 for the return of a "BAY MARE," stolen from the pasture of Francis Fenn, "sen. of Prince-George county," and that year helped appraise of the estate of local cabinetmaker Robert Miller, repeating the task in 1813 for the extensive estate of George Mason (see Miller, Robert and Mason, George).

Beginning in 1807, he is listed as residing on a part of lot 34 on Bollingbrook Street. An 1813 insurance appraisal of this property indicates a wooden dwelling house, a separate kitchen to the rear, and a twenty-four foot square, one-and-a-half story "Cabinet makers shop" made of wood. The house was insured for \$750 and the shop for \$500, buildings that were far less valuable than those of successful Petersburg cabinetmakers at that time. Furthermore, local ax records suggest that White never achieved more than a moderate degree of wealth. The 1815 tax survey of household possessions list a secretary, a sideboard, nine "bamboo or cane" chairs, and a bedstead. However, White paid taxes for seven black slaves, including two women and five children under the age of twelve. It is not clear why White, who apparently never married and who lived on a small urban lot, needed this number of servants. When his estate was appraised at the time of his death in 1829, several "Negro" mothers and ten children represented \$2280 or 63% of the estate's total value. Nor is it evident why a tradesmen with modestly sized lot and dwelling, valued together at only \$500, shared his property with several black families.

In 1816 White was paid a total of £6 from the estate of "U. Wear" for "a Coffin &c." He also received the recommendation of the "Coroner for the town," a distinction shared with another coffinmaker, Alexander Taylor, Jr. of Blandford. By 1817 White appears to have rented a portion of his lot, though the occupants are not known. His "cabinet shop" was still in operation as of July 1818 when it was mentioned in a newspaper advertisement for another local business. Two years later, White was called upon to administer the estate of the aforementioned Captain Taylor. Among the items listed in Taylor's inventory is "1 Old Hearse and Harness" valued at \$5 and that belonged to "Taylor and White," a logical partnership considering their shared participation in funerary services.

White's will was written on February 14, 1829, and was proven just five days later, suggesting that he was ill when it was drafted. The document stated that after the sale of personal property to take care of all his "just debts," the remainder of his estate was to be divided between the children of his late brother John White, "formerly of Mecklenburg County, Va., and late of Tennessee." William Robertson, Jr., possibly a relative of the Petersburg cabinetmaker listed in this study, was named administrator of the estate, and local cabinetmaker Samuel Caldwell assisted in the appraisal (see Robertson, William and Caldwell, Samuel). White's estate, valued at \$3,619.15, included several bottles of varnish, a "Dictionary Arts & Sciences," cabinetmaking tools valued at \$89.50, a grindstone, several inexpensive lots of pine and walnut "plank," five "Pine tables," and a lot of mahogany worth \$75. The listing "1 Sofa frame & Easy Chair" and "1 Lott Curled hair" valued at \$20 reveals that White performed upholstery work,

Whites' early orders from Sir Peyton Skipwith and surviving examples of his work at Prestwould clearly indicate that he was capable of producing a

wide range of sophisticated forms. After the end of this lucrative commission he seems to have concentrated on coffin production, many of which were relatively inexpensive. This reduction of quality manufacturing, along with a lack of advertisements in local newspapers, suggests that White's career, much like that of longtime Petersburg cabinetmaker William Stainback, was not very successful. Although the reasons are not evident, White appears to have been unable to maintain his earlier, high-level production. Perhaps he turned to other business activities that reduced his production as a cabinetmaker, a strong possibility in a town where the increased importation of wares after 1800 presented considerable competition to local furniture-makers.

Sir Peyton Skipwith Papers, Account Records with Samuel White; September 1, 1790; May 20, March 13, 1791; December 14, 1793; May 25, June 26, July 22, September 18, October 3, October 5, November 30, 1797; February 5, May 29, 1798.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1791-1797, October 6, 1795, p. 154.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, unp., October 1795.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, part 2, February 10, May 12, 1796, pp. 11 & 18.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1791-1797, October 3, 1796, p. 178.

Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer, October 4, 1796, 3-4.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, unp., January, 1797.

Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer, January 26, 1798, 4-3.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, part two, 1784-1805; June 21, 1801, p. 21.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, September 5, 1803, p. 180.

Petersburg Republican, October 6, 1804, 3-3.

The Republican, Petersburg, August 9, 1805, 4-3.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, April 10, 1806, p. 9.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 52, June 5, 1813, p. 334.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, September 13, 1813, pp. 89-91.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1812-1816, June 4, 1816.

Petersburg Republican, March 4, 1817, 3-4.

Petersburg Republican, July 21, 1818, 3-6.

Petersburg Republican, May 5, 1820, 1-2.

Petersburg Republican, May 20, 1820, 1-3.

Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 3, 1827-1829, February 10, 1829, p. 19b; February 14, 1829, p. 16b.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Lists, 1793-1820
Petersburg Land Tax Lists, 1792-1820

WILLIAMS, RUBIN
Cabinetmaker

(1820)

The 1820 Census of Manufacturers of Virginia lists Rubin Williams in Dinwiddie County under the heading of "cabinetmaker." Nothing else is known of his career in Petersburg.

1820 Census of Manufacturers, Virginia.

WILLS, SAMUEL H. (WELLS)
Cabinetmaker

(1811-post 1820)

Wills appears in the city tax lists in 1811 and 1812, but does not appear again until 1818. That year he apprenticed Littleton R. Vaughan, the orphan son of Enoch Vaughan, to learn the cabinet trade. This was the second time Vaughan's guardian, Peter Vaughan, had him apprenticed to Wills. The first contract apparently did not comply with the "Act of Assembly." By February 1819 Wills's operated a shop in a three story "Dwelling House" between Bank and Old Streets. It included a rear "counting room" occupied by T. R. Ryan. In March 1819 a lot on High Street occupied by "Mr. Samuel H. Wells" was offered for sale or rent. That year Wills was taxed for five adult white males, an adult black male, and a female, probably employees in his shop.

Wills offered his entire assortment of "CABINET FURNITURE" for auction in November 1819. Included were "Side-Boards, Bureaus, Bed-Steds; (Patent and Plain) Tea-Tables, Dining Tables, ditto with ends, Card Tables, first chop Sofas, Beds and Mattresses, Windsor Chairs, Easy Chairs, & c" (the unusual sofa

reference remains a mystery). Many similar forms were again offered in January 1820, as well as "Secretaries; Book Cases; China Presses; 1 Secretary Desk," and an assortment of riding chair materials, suggesting his involvement either directly or indirectly in that trade. That same month Wills paid a fifty-six cent tax to receive his license for keeping a "house of private Entertainment." Later notices for the sale or rent of his Bank Street shop provide further insight into the nature of Wills's activities. Located in the commercial part of town, it was described as "well calculated for a boarding house or will suit a gentleman with a private family" as well as a having a "spacious Lumber House." The building was also referred to as the "Cabinet Warehouse" lately occupied by Wills.

It is evident that Wills was as much a retail furniture merchant as a furniture-maker, a conclusion supported by his wide selection of Windsor and conventional furniture forms, upholstered items, and bedding materials. Apparently, he was one of many local furniture-makers to take advantage of Petersburg's numerous trade links to other cities, particularly to northern furniture manufacturing centers. Whether he abandoned the furniture business to keep a boarding house because of financial pressures or because he wished to rise socially within the community is not clear. Whatever the cause, his career change typifies that of many early nineteenth-century Petersburg furniture-makers who were unable to compete with the massive importation of manufactured wares.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, July 17, 1818.

Petersburg Republican, February 5, 1819, 3-5.

Petersburg Republican, March 16, 1819, 3-5.

Petersburg Republican, November 2, 1819, 3-5.

Petersburg Republican, January 4, 1820, 3-6.

Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1819-1823, January 20, 1820.

Petersburg Republican, April 28, 1820, 3-4.

Petersburg Republican, July 4, 1820, 3-6.
Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1811-1820

WOODWARD, STERLING
Windsor Chair Shop Lessor, Coachmaker

(1798)

While not directly involved in the cabinetmaking trade in Petersburg, Woodward's leasing of space in his coachmaking shop to a Windsor chairmaker may reflect a pattern of cooperation between local artisans. For example, another union of distinct trades occurred in Petersburg with the partnership of George Dillworth, a wire worker and wheat fan producer, and John Priest, a Windsor chairmaker (see Dillworth, George and Priest, John).

Although Sterling Woodward is listed in Petersburg's tax lists for 1798, he never again appeared in the city records. In fact, he spent most of his coachmaking career outside of town. By 1803 Woodward advertised through Petersburg newspapers that he made and repaired "Riding Chairs of every description" and "Carriages" in "Dinwiddie." An 1806 notice specifies that Woodward's shop location was "on the main road leading direct from Petersburg to Nottoway courthouse," later identified as "Poplar Grove, in Dinwiddie, eighteen miles above Petersburg." (The last reference is confusing because this location is south, not north of the city.) Evidence suggests that Woodward became embroiled in a number of legal disputes early during this period. In 1803, for example, he warned the public about people "verbally buying of things" in his name and publicly declared that he would not pay for any of these falsely contracted deals.

Despite these difficulties, Woodward apparently ran a successful coachmaking business. In 1806 he asked for two or three "active boys" to apprentice to the trade. In 1807 he placed a lengthy italicized notice in The

Republican addressed *"To the Citizens Of the States of Virginia & N. Carolina"* that thanked the customers he had in both regions and noted the *"great scarcity in the country"* of objects from his profession. Woodward also announced that he employed a young man *"well acquainted with the Windsor Chair making business"* who *"has on hand a few dozen well finished Windsor Chairs, and is daily finishing Chairs of different kinds."* No further references are known to this maker, nor to Woodward's involvement with furniture-making or selling. However, the numerous trade relationships between local Windsor furniture-makers and coachmakers in Petersburg can be well documented.

Woodward continued his coachmaking operation in Dinwiddie and sold many finished items through William Couch's shop on Old Street. His continued success is indicated by a long series of advertisements for a wide range of finished product and a regular posting of positions for apprentices and journeymen. In 1816 Woodward insured his "plantation" at Poplar Grove, a lot with a dwelling house, a large coachmaker's shop, and a detached kitchen. An 1819 advertisement, placed in Petersburg, Richmond, and Raleigh, North Carolina, newspapers, thanked his patrons "for 20 years back." In the notice Woodward referred to his business as a "manufactory" that employed all "Northern Workmen" who finished an elegant variety of carriages, gigs, ridings chairs, and "Family Stages."

Petersburg Republican, January, 4, 1803, 3-4.

Petersburg Republican, August 9, 1803, 2-5.

The Republican, Petersburg, August 14, 1806, 4-2.

The Republican, Petersburg, April 2, 1807, 1-1.

The Petersburg Intelligencer, February 25, 1814, 3-4.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 46, March 14, 1816.

Intelligencer, & Petersburg Commercial Advertiser, December 17, 1819.

Richmond Enquirer, October 21, 1820, 3-2.

Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1798.

Appendix B - *Excerpts from the will of John McCloud, a Norfolk trained cabinetmaker who worked in the Blandford section of Petersburg until his death in 1795. (Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, Petersburg, January 29, 1800, p. 295):*

Old Negro Woman Named Betty £40 - 1 Stained	
China Press £3 - 1 do do for Clothes 72/	£46/12/0
small Mahogany Walnut Table 30/ - 1 broken Black	
Walnut Candle Stand 12/ - 1 Eight day	
Clock \$7:10:0	9/12/0
Large looking Glasses with Mahogany frames 40/	
ea - 1 (dressing) ditto 12/	4/12/0
Feather Bed Pillow Boulster & Old Blanket	
all 60/ - 12 old black Walnut Chairs @ 12/	
7:4:0	10/4/0
Mahogany Elbo chair 18 - 6 Silver Table spoons	
16 Silver teaspoons & a pr. of Sugar tongs	
weighing 20 1/4 oz 6/8	7/13/0
saucers 10 teacups 6 Coffee do & 4 decanters	
(some broke) 9/ - 1 old Rim & Castors 3/	0/13/0
Dishes & 7 Plates 4/6 - 16 old & broken	
prints 6/ - 1 Japaned Sugar Box with no	
lid 4 ^d - 1 Tea Kettle 4/6	0/15/4
Iron Pot 6/ - 2 pair tongs & pair And Irons	
broke 2/6 - 2 old square pine tables 6/ -	
1 liquor Case & Bottles	<u>1/12/6</u>
	<u>£81/12/0</u>

Appendix C - Excerpts from the estate inventory for George Mason, cabinetmaker, who married the daughter of local chairmaker Jonathan Russell and established a large cabinetmaking operation on their family property, lot #42 on Old Street. The first part of the inventory includes the contents of Mason's furniture "Ware Room," and the second part includes the contents of his cabinetmaking shop. (Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, Petersburg, August 10, 1813, pp. 89-91):

4 Bureaus @ \$25	100.00
1 Cylinder Desk and Book case	110.00
2 Sideboards @ \$120	240.00
1 Pr. Card tables	45.00
1 Cylinder desk and Book-case	120.00
1 Easy chair	25.00
1 Candlestand	8.00
12 Fancy Windsor Chairs	55.00
1 Fancy Settee	30.00
1 Plain Mahog bedstead	30.00
2 Mahog bed posts (carved)	10.00
1 circular wash stand	12.00
4 Fancy writing chairs @ \$10	40.00
947 feet of Inch St. Domingo Mahogy @ 38/100	359.86
67 feet of 1/2 inch St. Domingo Mahogy @ 20/100	13.40
563 feet of Inch Bay Mahogy @ 30/100	168.90
6 Bed posts	15.00
122 feet pine scantling	2.44
2 Setts Mahog. bed posts	24.00
One lott of Mahogany	36.00
1346 feet pine plank @ \$15 p. M	20.19
90 feet Gum scantling @ 3/100 p. foot	2.70
181 feet Walnut plank @ 6/100	10.86
130 feet 1/2 Inch poplar @ 2 Cents	2.60
1 frame saw	18.00
5 Setts Bed posts	60.00
One Piece of Mahogany	36.00
4 Sattin Wood Vaneers	4.00
27 fett Mahog Vaneers	6.75
2 Common Bedsteads	9.00
1 Turning lathe and Tools	30.00
136 feet of 2 I. pine	4.76
2 Vaneering Saws	12.00
Broken Crates of Glass	25.00
8 Work Benches @ \$5	40.00
15 long & 5 Jack planes	20.00
One Mahogy Wash stand	4.00
6 Smoothing planes, & 1 Tooth plane	8.00
33 hollows & rounds, moulding planes &c	22.00
One plow with 8 irons	6.00
16 Hand Screws	6.00
4 Pannel Saws	7.00
One Tenon Saw	2.00
two Sash Saws	3.00

One Hand Saw	1.25
One Dove Tail Saw	.50
One Bow & one breaking Saw	2.00
One large Cramp	10.00
One Grind Stone	6.00
One small Vice (damaged)	.50
two Hold fasts	3.00
two Glue Kettles	3.00
two Hatchets	2.00
2 Sad Irons	1.00
Stuff for a Sideboard	3.00
One unfinished Secretary	20.00
One ditto Bureau	8.00
two common bedsteads, 2 beds & 4 blankets	35.00
six pounds curled Hair	2.50
One broken easy chair frame	.75
Cuttings of Mahogany	100.00
One Negro Boy (Jacob)	300.00
One Negro Girl (Amey)	170.00
One Sorrel Horse	70.00
One Coachee & Harness	350.00
One Gigg & Harness	175.00
One Hearse	120.00
....[household and kitchen furniture, 1000 shingles	
@ \$3, small library of books, 6 1/2 yards canvass	
follow, interrupted by Screws, mounting &c. with a	
case	80.00
Bees Wax	2.50
One Cart & Harness	45.00
One Brace & 18 Bits	6.00

Appendix D - *The estate inventory for Jonathan Russell, chairmaker, who lived on lot 42, Old Street. The inventory was taken in 1801, and among the appraisers of his estate was William Stainback, a local cabinetmaker from whom Russell purchased lot #42 in 1793. Because no specific references are known concerning Russell's occupation, bold type has been inserted to illuminate articles that possibly indicate his work as a chairmaker. (Hustings Court Will Book, No.1, 1784-1805, Petersburg, p. 318):*

We the Subscribers appointed Appraisers of the Estate of Jonathan Russell Dec^d agreeably to an Order of the Hustings Court of the town of Petersburg, at February Court last, have appraised the Estate as Follows -

Schooner Martha Ann	£700/0/0	
a lighter or Skew	35/0/0	
Lewis a Negro man		45/0/0
Kezie a woman	85/0/0	
Beck a young woman	75/0/0	
1 cow & Calf	8/0/0	
1 ditto		6/0/0
1 Heifer	4/0/0	
1 Bed Bedstead & furniture		11/0/0
1 Mahogany Bedstead	7/0/0	
1 Bed & furniture		5/0/0
1 Maple Bedstead	3/0/0	
1 Bed & furniture		12/0/0
1 ditto		5/0/0
1 Sideboard	1/10/0	
1 Chest Drawers		6/0/0
1 Candlestand		0/18/0
1 Small Cupboard	0/18/0	
1 Mahogany Desk & Bookcase		18/0/0
1 Pair dining Tables	10/0/0	
1 Writing Desk with a small parcel Glue F Skin	&c.0/6/0	
1 Clock	18/0/0	
1 Desk & Drawers	4/0/0	
1 Mahogany Table		1/16/0
1 Teatable		1/10/0
1 Pine Table	0/6/0	
1 Oak Tea Table		0/10/0
1 riding chair with two bodys & Harness	30/0/0	
1 Horse	36/0/0	
1 Case & Cristal Bottles	2/2/0	
1 Case w ^l . common bottles	0/6/0	
1 pair Brass Fire Dogs & a p ^r . tongs		0/18/0
1 " Common D ^o . w th . Tongs &c.		0/6/0
1 Gun	3/12/0	
1 Looking glass		0/12/0
1 ditto	1/0/0	
2 Paint Stones		1/10/0
1 Jug Spirits Turpentine		0/12/0
17 Oil Jugs	1/5/6	

2 1/2 Barrells Whiting	30/	<u>3/15/0</u>
Amount Brought Forwd.		£1146/12/6
2 Large Canisters	0/12/0	
13 Windsor chairs 5/	3/5/0	
1 Mahogany Tea Tray	1/10/0	
1 " " Knife Box 5 knives & 5 forks	0/12/0	
1/2 doz Silver teaspoons & p ^r . Sugar tongs	2/2/0	
3 silver Tablespoons & 1 tureen ladle		3/12/0
1 Coffee Mill		0/3/0
1 Pewter Basin & Dish 2 Tinpans	0/10/0	
7 Q ^w . [Queensware] China Plates 2 dishes & 1 Pudding Dish	0/12/0	
1 P ^r . Qt. Decanters 1/2 doz wine Glasses 1 pr Salts & 1 Tumbler	0/15/0	
1 Rim & Castors		0/4/6
1 p ^r . Brass Candlesticks	0/15/0	
1 Hand Bellows		0/6/0
1 Saddle & Bridle	2/8/0	
1 Chest Tools including 3 Saws		6/0/0
1 P ^r . Steelyards		0/5/0
2 P ^r . Scales	0/9/0	
1 Sett Turning Laithes		3/0/0
3 Work Benches		1/4/0
1 Grind Stone		0/12/0
1 Spinning Wheel & Cards		0/12/0
1 P ^r . Sad Irons	0/3/0	
1 Pan 3 Potts 2 Dutch Ovens 1 Tea Kettle 1 Brass Skillet & 1 Iron Kettle	3/12/0	
3 Tubs & 1 pine table	0/12/0	
1 Stove Iron	3/12/0	
a parcel of Chair makers material & some unfinished chairs	3/0/0	
16 Poplar planks	1/16/0	
1 Sett Candle Moulds	0/6/0	
	<hr/>	
	£1189/8/0	

Allin Stokes
 Dav Anderson
 William Stainback

At a Hustings Court held for the town of Petersburg at the Courthouse of the said town Monday the 6th day of April 1801. An inventory & appraisal of the Goods & Chattells of Jonathan Russell dece'd was returned signed by Allen Stokes David Anderson & William Stainback Appraisers appointed for that purpose, amounting to Eleven Hundred & Eighty Nine Pounds Eight Shillings, and Ordered to be recorded - Attest.

Appendix E - Excerpts from the estate inventory for Alexander Taylor, Jr, cabinetmaker and coffinmaker, who worked in the Blandford section of Petersburg until his death in 1820. (Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, Petersburg, April 29, 1820, pp. 253a-254b).

Two lists were included in the inventory, one citing a number of items sold by the administrator of the estate, local cabinetmaker Samuel White, before they could be appraised. This list included the following book:

Gentlemand Cabinetmakers Guide 1 Vol \$6.00

(As noted by Samuel White, administrator of Taylors estate, this volume refers to Thomas Chippendale's Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director first published in London in 1754. It is probably the same "Cabinet makers Guide" listed in the estate of Taylor's father, valued at \$4.00).

The other list taken by the appraisers included 32 more books by title, another "40 old volumes various authors," a gun with shot bag and powder horn, a grid iron and trivet, three jugs, one demijohn, and a pine dining table. The contents of Taylor's cabinet shop are noted as:

1	Sideboard with Secretary drawer	\$40.00	
1	do do with Collmns	40.00	
1	do do with Eliptic front not finished	10.00	
1	do do with Straigh front and a Candle stand	10.00	
1	Bedstead of Mahogany	20.00	
1	do of do	20.00	
1	do of do	20.00	
1	do of do	20.00	
1	Settee of do	2.00(?)	
1	Tea Table of do	10.00	
1	Work Stand of do unfinished	10.00	
1	Circular Table with a drawer of do	6.00	
1	Wax Work Case of do	2.00	
1	Old Harpsechord	1.00	
1	Dining Room Fan with staft and semicircle	.25	
1	do do do with do and do	.25	
1	Guittar Case fo Pine	1.00	
12	Cherry Chairs	4.00	
4	Easy Chair frames \$1	4.00	
12	Mahogany and Walnut bed posts new and old	3.00	
	a parcel of curled hair	1.00	
	a parcel of cord	1.00	
	a parcel of Mahog ⁿ y in Garret and cutting of do in do	30.00	
2	Music Stands of Mahog ⁿ y	.60	
2	Pine boxes begun for book Case	.60	
1	Shet (?) of a Bureau and one Waiter	.24	
	Mahog ⁿ y plank and Stubs in Cellar	16.00	
	do Scatlin in	do	6.00
	do Vin(cer) in	do	4.00

	do	Cuttings		in	do
	6.00				
	Cherry and Wanut plank	in	do	6.00	
	Birch	do	do	3.00	
	Birch and Gum Scantlin	i n	do	8.00	
	Pine Plank	i n	do	3.00	
12	Work Benches		10.00		
25	Hand Screws		15.00		
1	Turning Lathe and Tools say 30 Chissels and Gouges		5.00		
3	frame saw plates	.50			
1	Wood Saw		.75		
1	Vaneuring Saw		5.00		
	Gum and Poplar plank		8.00		
1	Secretary and Book Case			50.00	
1	Book Case		15.00		
1	China Press			40.00	
1	Pine Press with drawers (old)			10.00	
1	Gigg and Harness		5.00		
1	Old Hearse and Harness (Taylor and White)		5.00		
1	plain Pine Press		7.00		
3	Iron Cramps and on[e] bench Vice		10.00		
1	Pit Saw		2.00		
8	hand, frame and Tenon Saws			4.00	
24	Carving Gouges		2.00		
	a parcel of Prints and Frames			.25	
3	Tool Chests and Tools			30.00	
1	Stove and Pipe		2.00		
2	Bow Saws		3.00		
	One pound of lamp black			.10	
1	Empty Liquor Case		.24		
3	Pair of Table Planes			4.50	
	Locks, Screws, Rings, Tacks, Coffin Mounting &c	5.00			
1	Grind Stone			.24	

Appendix F - Excerpts from the estate inventory for Hugh Tollock, December 18, 1786, a carpenter/cabinetmaker in Petersburg (Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, Petersburg, p. 75). The appraisal was made by Andrew Hamilton, local cabinetmakers Alexander Taylor and Richard Powell.

Tollock had personal property including household and kitchen furniture, clothing (itemized), a silver watch, and other wares, with a total value of £40/7/5. Included in this were the apparent contents of his shop:

16 Gimblets 2/6 - 9 files 2/ - 8 Chisels 3/6 - 4 Plane Irons 2/4 -	
1 Saw Sett 6d	9/10
4 Gouges 1/6 - 1 Rabbit plane Iron 4d - 7 Augers 6/ -	
5 Chisels & one gouge 2/3	10/1
2 Planes 5/ - Rasp & File 9d - 4 Gimblets 9d - 2 Broadening Awls 2	6/8
2 Sliding Rules 3/ - 2 Hammers 9d - 1 Square 6d - 2 Planes 1/9 -	
2 Adzes 3/	9/0
1 Chest Drawers unfinish 30/ - 1 Grind Stone 2/6 - 1 pair	
Compasses 6d	[14/9]
1 Bench Screw 5/...	[5/0]
1 work Bench 6/	[6/0]
...2 Carpenters squares 1/ - 1 Plane 1/6	[2/6]
1 Mallet & Gouge 63 - 1 Hoe 2/ - 600 feet plank 36/	1/18/6
1 Silver Watch 80/ - 1 Table Frame 3/	4/3/0
1 Lot of Plank 4/6 - 1 do half dresd. - 250 feet 15/	19/6

Appendix G - Excerpts from the estate inventory for Petersburg cabinetmaker Daniel Vaughan (Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, Petersburg. September 19, 1825, pp. 217b-218b). After the listing of his household inventory there is a "list of furniture &c &c at Shop near Oaks Warehouse:

1	Bureau Mahogany	18.00	
1	Side Board with Columns mahogany	45.00	
1	do do plain do	30.00	
1	pair Tea Tables	15.00	
1	Large dining Table		12.00
1	Easy Chair	8.00	
1	Bottom part of China Press	10.00	
1	Curtain Bed Stead Mahogany		20.00
1	do do do	15.00	
1	do do do	15.00	
1	Curtain do Maple	24.00	
1	top part China Press (unfinished)	8.00	
3	Low post Bedsteads	7.50	
1	Curtain Bedstead poplar (unfinished)	3.00	
1	do do secondhand	10.00	
1	Pine frame		.25
1	Bottom part of China Press unfinished	2.00	
1	B_____ [illegible] (unfinished) [bureau]	3.00	
1	Veneering Saw	5.00	
1	Cramp		5.00
1	Chest of Tools	75.00	
5	Work Benches	12.00	
1	Curtain Bedstead Poplar		3.00
1	Grindstone		4.00
1	Lot of Plank	10.00	
1	Lot of Mahogany in small bitts	.50	
1	Pine Bedstead	.50	
1	Cupboard	1.00	
1	Stove and pipe	10.00	
13	Hand Saws	6.00	
1	Lot of plank and Pailing		5.00
1	Lathe & wheel	50.00	

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